



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

1838 HWP History of the recent insurrection...

NYPL RESEARCH LIBRARIES



3 3433 06735824

Histor
in t
1838.

HWP
of the recent insurrection
in Canadas.



1838

HWP

History of the recent insurrection...

NYPL RESEARCH LIBRARIES



3 3433 06735824 6

HWP

History of the recent insurrection
in the Canadas.
1838.





United States Magazine and Demo-
cratic Review. V. 4. Washin
ton, D.C., 1838.

—THE—
MONTHLY MDG. No.
HISTORICAL REGISTER.

—MARCH—JUNE, 1838.

HISTORY OF THE RECENT INSURRECTION IN THE
CANADAS.

PART FIRST.

State of parties in Canada—Riots in Montreal between the Sons of Liberty and the loyalists—Arrest of the popular leaders—Rescue of prisoners at Longueuil—March of the troops upon Chambly—Defensive measures of the Patriots—Expeditions against St. Charles—March of Col. Gore from Sorel, and capture of Lieut. Weir. Repulse of Col. Gore at St. Denis—Death of Lieut. Weir—Battle of St. Charles—Public feeling in Montreal and the United States—Return of Col. Wetherall, and triumphal entry into Montreal—March of Col. Gore through the disturbed district—Views of the patriot leaders, and character of the insurrection—Proclamation of Lord Gosford—Martial law declared, and rewards offered for the patriotic leaders—Affair at Moore's Corner—The insurgents gather at Grand Brûlé.

In a preceding article in this periodical* it to seek redress by the violent national remedies of insurrection and revolution. we have enumerated the prominent constitutional causes of complaint, which, Yet, although for some months previous existing for so many years between the to the late explosion the exasperated state Canadas and Great Britain, had at length of the public mind in the two great parties into which the country was divided, produced a degree of soreness and irritation in the former country, that prepared as indicated by the tone of the press in

NOTE.—In accordance with the plan which we have hitherto adopted in preparing the Historical Department of the Democratic Review, we have delayed all notice of the recent disturbances in the Canadas, until we could present our readers with such a comprehensive narrative of the whole of these deeply exciting and important events as would be found in present interest, and future value, much more desirable than casual, and frequently inaccurate, notices of occurrences as they happened. In executing this task, slight as it is, we have experienced much difficulty from the insufficiency and contradictory nature of our materials; and anxious as has been our desire to render the thread of the narrative perfect and unbroken, we are afraid that we have at times failed to give an account of particular occurrences as complete as might be wished. It is certainly as accurate as the materials within our reach would enable us to make it; and though the facts, as we find them, scattered through the principal American and Canadian papers, which formed our only sources of information, are often distorted by party views, or colored to suit the feelings of prejudiced writers, we have endeavoured, by balancing one account with another, to arrive at the truth, and present a narrative of the transactions which may be relied upon in its facts, and referred to in future as a detailed and authentic account of one of those episodes of popular disturbance which are so soon forgotten, and so often misrepresented in history, but which have an abiding influence on the destiny of the people among whom they occur.

* Democratic Review, January, 1838. Vol. I. pp. 205—220.

VOL. IV.

H*

Checked
May 1918

the opposite political interests, showed a tendency to the extremity of violence, its actual approach was not deemed so near, at least by the leaders of the liberal or reform party, and the great bulk of the inhabitants, who were either covertly or openly attached to that interest. For months the tory party had been calling for coercive measures on the part of the Government, with an unanimity and earnestness that in some cases approached the ferocious. Lord Gosford, a moderate and liberal-minded politician, who at first appears to have sought to direct the affairs of the province by infusing a spirit of conciliation, and enlightened, though cautious, reform, into his administration, became odious in the eyes of this faction, and was daily denounced as encouraging, if not aiding, the reformers in attempts subversive of the British interest in America. The strong hand of power was earnestly invoked against the obnoxious doctrines of the patriotic party, and any thing short of a decisive rejection of their unreasonable demands, and a proportionate strengthening of the ascendant party, was deemed futile, temporizing, and absurd.

The liberal cause, on the other hand, was advocated with signal energy and boldness, by a large portion of the press; and repeated indications had shown it to be supported by a heavy majority of the farming population. In the local legislature, under the guidance of Papineau, proved to be a popular leader of not less ability than discretion and soundness of view, this party had for years maintained a vigorous struggle, in favor of the native population, against the accumulated grievances of the provincial constitution; and had latterly, from the increasing violence of its opponents, sought to strengthen itself still farther by promoting among its members, associations, organized in strict accordance with law, and having avowedly for their object a speedy and more complete attainment of a thorough reform, than it were possible to hope for from individual effort. One of the most active and numerous of these associations, called the "Sons of Liberty," of Montreal, was especially disliked by the tory faction, for its influence, extent, and great efficacy in keeping alive, in the province,

a high state of public enthusiasm in favor of the proposed measures of reform; and the extent to which this feeling increased at length precipitated that collision of force, which reflecting minds had long deemed inevitable between the parties.

On Monday, the sixth of November, 1837, the Sons of Liberty had met for a public procession, and were proceeding through the streets of Montreal, when they were attacked by the "Doric Club" a body composed of the ultra loyalists, and a severe skirmish took place. The disturbance increased to such a degree of violence that the military, supported by artillery, was called out, amid the cheers of the royalists, to overawe the multitude.

Under their protection the riot act was read, after which the local authorities succeeded in quelling the tumult, and the Sons of Liberty dispersed. Their opponents, however, emboldened by the presence of the troops, were not disposed to let the occasion pass without some striking proof of their ascendancy, and attacked the house of Mr. Papineau, which they were with difficulty prevented from destroying. Less pains were taken to preserve the next object of their violence, and the office of the *Vindicator* was in a few minutes in complete possession of the mob. The types were thrown into the street, the presses and machinery broken up, and every thing relating to the business of the establishment utterly destroyed. An outrage so unparalleled produced, as might be expected, a high degree of excitement throughout the city. The *Vindicator* had become endeared to the people, and identified with them, from its bold and able advocacy of their cause, and was, confessedly, at the head of the press in the province, for the industry, activity, and talent with which it was conducted. Renewed exertions were made by the liberal party, to meet the spirit now evidently arrayed against them; and retaliatory measures brought on frequent collisions between them and the excited tories during the whole of Monday. Eager for excuses to authorize more decisive measures than mob law, this party broke open a house in Dorchester street, Montreal, which had been used as a place of rendezvous for the Sons of Liberty, and three fowling pieces, and a banner, used in an old procession,

the whole armament found on the premises, were magnified into organized preparations for treason, and formally delivered over to the authorities. The windows of a Mr. Bradbury, who had sheltered some of the obnoxious reformers, were smashed, and various other acts of violence committed.

These slight commotions, which under other circumstances would scarcely have furnished employment for the town police, or materials for a newspaper paragraph, sufficed, in the high state of political excitement then existing in the Canadas, to embroil both parties in the guilt and horrors of civil warfare; and furnished occasion for the effectual repression, by the Government, of every spark of popular liberty in the provinces. The British press in Montreal called with frantic violence on the Executive for the strongest measures of power. They urged the immediate arrest of all the eminent individuals who had for years been identified with every liberal measure; and some even went so far as to declare that the Governor would betray the cause of his sovereign, if he hesitated to organize the military force at his command, and proclaim martial law at once. Lord Gosford did not long hesitate between his convictions and his position as a British governor. Rumors of popular disturbance in the district of St. Johns, where the *habitans* had compelled many of the recently appointed militia officers to throw up their commissions, and had disarmed others, who had made themselves obnoxious to the popular feeling, by being enrolled in these odious corps, redoubled the activity, or the fears, of the British faction; and on Friday, the tenth of November, a troop of cavalry, with a field piece, were despatched from Montreal to intimidate the inhabitants, and repress these popular movements. The report of Capt. Glasgow, the officer commanding this detachment, as to the state of the country through which he passed, caused its reinforcement, by the grenadier company of the Royals, and several considerable additions to the garrison of Montreal were made from the secure fortress of Quebec.

The Government, deeming itself sufficiently strengthened by these precautions,

at length took the expected and decisive step of arresting the prominent leaders of the popular party; and, on the sixteenth of November, warrants, on the capital charge of high treason, were issued against a large number of individuals in Montreal and its vicinity. Of these Messieurs André Ouimet, President of the "*Fils de la Liberté*," J. Dubuc, Francis Tavernier, George de Boucherville, advocate, Dr. Simard, and a student of law, Mr. Leblanc, were arrested and committed to gaol. Mr. Papineau, Dr. O'Callaghan, Mr. T. S. Brown, Rodolphe Desrivieres, Ovide Perreault, and some others, taking alarm, succeeded in effecting their escape; and, in self-protection, immediately proceeded to raise their adherents. Similar arrests of many prominent individuals, among the native population, had been previously effected in Quebec, among these were, Aimable Norbert Morin, one of the principal directors of the movement party, and whose zeal and influence were conspicuous in promoting their measures, Mr. Chasseur, the printer of the *Liberal*, another of the able, and consequently proscribed popular journals,—of which one of the editors, Mr. Bouchette, had previously escaped,—with Messrs. Legare, Lechance, and Trudeau.

The arrest of their leaders highly exasperated the numerous population of the districts round Montreal, who, consisting nearly exclusively, of native French Canadians, were liberals to a man, and almost immediately led to the first issue of blood between the parties. A constable, escorted by a small party of cavalry, had been sent, in pursuance of the general system of arrest, to the town of St. Johns with warrants against Dr. Davigon and Mr. Demaray, and had succeeded in securing these gentlemen without difficulty; when the insulting indignities with which they were treated so exasperated their neighbours, that, hastily assembling in large numbers, they resolved to effect their deliverance. They awaited the approach of the troops, on their return to Montreal, near Longueil, and when they came up the leader of the party stopped the wagon, in which the prisoners, besides being manacled, were tied down, as one of them

afterwards described, "like pigs in a horse cart," and demanded their release. He was answered by a pistol shot from one of the cavalry, which brought on a general attack on the escort, in which their fire told with fatal effect on the assailants. Their commander, however, Lieutenant Ermatinger, and several others, being severely wounded, and many of the horses disabled, they were compelled to retreat upon Longueuil, leaving the prisoners behind; and were suffered to go away without farther molestation, though they were so completely in the power of the insurgents that not one could have escaped, had their lives been sought.

This occurrence, simple as it was, furnished the crisis for which the party into whose hands the executive power from this time seems to have been surrendered, had long sighed. Blood had been shed. The opposing interests were fairly pitted against each other in the field. They felt their political rivals were within their grasp, and found it impossible to conceal their gratification. "The long desired blow is at last struck by the Government"—says the *Montreal Courier* in announcing this affray.—"Blood has at last been shed by the rebels, who now stand unmasked, and fairly subject to the worst penalties of the laws they have insulted. No British subject could desire better things," &c. The other papers emulated this tone. "We have reason to *hope*," says another, "that a considerable number of additional arrests are likely to be made. The more men the better." And again, "No stone must be left unturned to insure the arrest of every man against whom evidence can be found to warrant a fair hope of his conviction." These patriotic and humane aspirations were soon realized to their fullest extent. The very semblance of insurrection sufficed to banish from Lord Gosford's mind all the constitutional sympathies of his political school; and a liberal whig governor, acting under a reform ministry, was seen in a moment to wield all the dread prerogatives of military despotism with the tyrannic energy of a Castlereagh or a Pitt, and to put in motion in an instant that massive and almost resistless weight of power, which the vigilant and highly organized system of

British administration places so unreservedly—even to the whole extent of the empire's strength—in the hands of the Executive on occasions like the present.

On the following morning, Lieut. Col. Wetherall, with a detachment consisting of four companies of the Royals, a party of the Royal Artillery, under Capt. Glasgow, with two field pieces, and a company of the Montreal Volunteer Cavalry, under Capt. David, set out for the scene of the late skirmish. It was not deemed advisable at this early stage of military proceedings to dispense altogether with the established precedents of English law, and Mr. Duchesnay, the deputy sheriff of Montreal, and two magistrates, Messrs. P. E. Leclerc and Bellingham, accompanied the troops to authorize their movements. Their orders were, to march through the disturbed district to Chambly, an old French fortress, where a large number of the disaffected habitants were reported to have been assembled, so as to overawe the neighbourhood, and strengthen the hands of government in that vicinity.

On their way, that rich and populous district bore every where the appearance of a hostile country in possession of the enemy. The houses were uniformly deserted, with the doors and windows nailed up; and, though vigorous search was made repeatedly, neither arms nor inmates could be found. So hasty had been the abandonment, in some instances, that the fires were still burning when the desolate hearths were invaded by the troops; but with an instinctive dread, which is a melancholy commentary on the cause of their intrusion, not even a woman or a child were found sufficiently confiding to trust themselves to their military visitors. All had fled; and in a British province, a British commander, acting under the authority of his government, witnessed the sad but impressive spectacle of his presence being viewed by the people as if a foreign and sanguinary foe had invaded their homes, instead of meeting the encouragement and assistance which the recognized forces of a paternal government, called in the exercise of their vocation to protect the public peace, and preserve the public tranquillity, had a right to expect.

About six miles from Chambly the military saw a small party of mounted country people, to whom the cavalry immediately gave chase; and, after a flying skirmish, in which firing was repeatedly interchanged, succeeded in capturing two of the number. On nearing Chambly, about sundown, another body of the populace was found posted beyond the bridge leading to the town, and made a precipitate retreat on the approach of the troops, who made five additional prisoners. The magistrates now returned to Montreal, and the military took up their quarters at Chambly.

The great activity which was displayed on this manifestation of armed opposition, in all branches of the executive government, and among the opponents of the native party in Montreal, now fully showed that the keen scent of authority snuffed rebellion in every popular movement; and consequently in all its subsequent measures the administration rushed with such alacrity and precipitation into the most violent retaliatory proceedings, that no alternative was left, even to the most peaceably disposed advocate of reform, between tame submission to the insulting mercy of a bigoted and intolerant faction—who never could discriminate between treason and a patriotic advocacy of popular right—and a firm appeal to the last resort of arms. Rebellion, “foul, dishonoring word,” was malignly fastened upon acts which had long been regarded with unequivocal applause by the community; and it seemed to afford the Government and its partisans the highest species of political pleasure, to meet with the sword, as rebels, the whole party whom they disdained to conciliate as patriots, and failed to convince as reformers. Arrest succeeded arrest. In Montreal, the gaols were crowded with prisoners of State. The streets resounded with the clang of arms, from citizens stimulated to this battle trial of their loyalty and innocence of treason; and the whole city presented an afflicting exemplification of the most odious spectacle which any vicissitude of political change can afford—a government reign of terror.

The patriots prepared to meet the cruel extremity to which they were forced with a

firmness adequate to the occasion. The principal strength of their cause lay in the devoted French population in the district lying south of Montreal; along the Richelieu, and thither the proscribed leaders who had the good fortune to escape the attempt of the Government to clutch them, immediately repaired, and commenced a hasty organization of the people. Dr. Wolfred Nelson, Chairman of the Address of the Six Counties, and who carried on business as a distiller, at St. Denis, fortified his house, and an immense number of the habitants thronged to it as a common point for protection and defence. Mr. T. S. Brown, one of the most active and influential leaders of reform, took the principal management of affairs. He directed a concentration of all the popular adherents at St. Charles, which village, under his directions, was rapidly prepared for defence, and afforded a secure temporary head-quarters. The house of Mr. Debartzch, a member of the Executive Council, situated near the Church, within St. Charles, and which, though built of wood, from its central and secure position, was well adapted for the purpose, was likewise taken possession of by the insurgents, and strongly entrenched; the cattle on the farm were killed and salted, and other measures taken to render it capable of defence. At St. Charles, Mr. Brown, associated with some others, soon found himself at the head of a large number of enthusiastic followers, which was hourly receiving accessions from all quarters in the vicinity; and every thing indicated an unanimous rising on the part of the people.

The owner of some wheat on the way to Montreal, which had been seized by the commissariat of this undisciplined force, who had been allowed to proceed, brought the first news of these movements to the city. The Government at once threw off the mask, and as if resolved to take revenge for years of irritating popular opposition, determined to visit, with the most signal retribution of blood, this the first deviation of the patriots from the accustomed mode of those harmless clamors for redress which had so long annoyed Canadian administrations. The civic remedies of justice and mercy seemed at

once to have lost their power. The exigency was beyond all the maxims of a calm and wise government, and the awful responsibility of meeting a crisis, calling peculiarly for their exercise, was resigned to the commander of the forces, Sir John Colborne, a prompt soldier, and exact tactician, in all respects admirably qualified to extinguish forever these troublesome grievances by the sovereign remedies of the bayonet and the bullet, and who, without loss of time, took his measures accordingly.

The large garrison of Montreal was immediately organized for full military service. The volunteer corps were placed on war duty; and a campaign, with the whole regular force in the city, was resolved upon against the disturbed district. Lieut. Col. Wetherall, stationed at Chambly, and strongly reinforced, was directed to march upon St. Charles, on the twenty-second of November, and disperse the patriots, by the summary process of military assault; while another detachment, under the command of Lieut. Col. Gore, was got ready, with the intention of proceeding down the river to Sorel so as to coöperate against the same point from the opposite direction, and thus enclose the insurgents simultaneously between two hostile fires.

This detachment, about to enter on the first hostile service in which any portion of the British army had been engaged for years, was the first brought into collision with the people. It left Montreal, on the evening of Wednesday, November 22nd, and consisted of two companies of the 24th regiment of British Infantry, under Lieut. Col. Hughes; the Light Company of the 23d, under Capt. Markham; one company of the 66th, under Capt. Crompton; and a company of artillery, with a small body of cavalry, and a howitzer; they were also accompanied by two magistrates, that their proceedings might not want at least the color of law. This expedition proceeded down the Saint Lawrence about forty-five miles, to Sorel, on the river Richelieu, in the steamboat St. George. Here they landed about ten o'clock at night, and immediately, in the face of the most inclement weather took up the line of march for the

hostile district. The rain fell, during the whole night, in torrents, and it was with difficulty that the men were able to force their way, through mud knee-deep, and over roads entirely broken up with rain and frost. On the way this inclement weather continued, but they met with no other opposition until the morning of the following day; when an unexpected accident, which had made the patriots aware of their advance, brought them into direct conflict with a powerful body of the armed inhabitants, by whom they were completely checked, and the immediate objects of the expedition frustrated.

Lieut. Weir, of the 32nd regiment, had been sent from Montreal, by land, with despatches for Col. Gore; but reaching Sorel after the expedition had departed, he hired a caleche and set off with a view to overtake them at St. Charles. There are two parallel roads from Sorel, which converge four miles from St. Ours, on the upper of which, lying by the river Richelieu, the troops had marched. Lieutenant Weir, by mistake, took the other, and travelling much quicker, passed them, and arrived at St. Denis, a small village on the south bank of the river, about seven o'clock next morning. His expressions of surprise at not seeing any soldiers; was the first intimation to the inhabitants of the hostile array which was approaching. He was immediately detained and searched, and the important intelligence which he bore communicated to Dr. Wolfred Nelson; who, with a promptness and energy adequate to the occasion, called out the villagers *en masse*, and prepared to dispute the passage of the troops.

After a most fatiguing night march of more than twelve hours, the cavalry forming the advanced guard of the detachment, reached St. Denis, and found to their surprise a large number of the insurgents posted to receive them. As the horsemen came up they were fired upon from the houses and sides of the road, and instantly fell back upon the main body. The entire force was then brought forward, and, after some severe skirmishing in which several on either side were killed and wounded, they succeeded in clearing the houses and barns of their as-

sailants. The main body of the patriots was stationed in a large and strong stone house, near the entrance of the village, from which a galling and spirited fire was kept up on the troops. Col. Gore directed the fire of his howitzer against this building, but such was the spirit and obstinacy with which the patriots continued their fire that he was compelled to retreat, with the loss of his howitzer, and having had seven or eight men killed, and about as many wounded,—among whom was Capt. Markham. The steamboat *Varennes*, which had been ordered to follow up the river Richelieu, to support the troops with supplies of provision and ammunition, was attacked by the populace at St. Ours, about nine miles below St. Denis, and driven back; and the troops were consequently compelled to make their retreat in wretched plight back to Sorel as they best might, many of them having lost their shoes in the mud, their artillery, and even wounded comrades having been left behind, and all being utterly fatigued and disheartened. They however reached Sorel in safety, having met upon their way a considerable reinforcement from Montreal, sent down in consequence of the despatches which had been forwarded with the result of their operations, and which it was deemed more prudent should retrace its steps with the detachment it had come to succour.

Their courage and firmness in this action cost the patriots a much heavier loss than their enemies. The murderous discharge of the howitzer into the large building, which was crowded with men, occasioned a profuse and melancholy destruction of life, and many others were killed and wounded by musketry in the course of the affair. The entire number has been variously estimated, and probably was not far short of one hundred persons,—a frightful carnage, which few will be hardy enough to say was rendered indispensable by any political necessity. Although this action was attended with this heavy loss to the undisciplined patriots, still it was successful, and exerted a proportionate influence on their cause. A formidable body of royal troops, forming part of a combined military ope-

ration, of the highest importance, had been successfully intercepted, and compelled to make a retreat so precipitate that even the succours sent to their assistance were found insufficient to retrieve the disaster, and retrograded with them. The friends of the popular cause were highly stimulated; and serious fears of a protracted warfare were entertained even by the most sanguine of the government adherents.

It is to be regretted that the success of the day was tarnished by one of those atrocities, so often connected with popular outbreaks, that they have come to be considered as inseparable from them, by their foes, and have certainly injured incipient revolution even more than they have stained it. As soon as the approach of the troops was ascertained, the patriot leader, Dr. Nelson, deemed it proper to remove the prisoner, Lieut. Weir, to a place of greater security, and he was placed under the charge of one Jalbert, a captain of militia, and sent forward, in a wagon to the head-quarters, at Saint Charles, with an escort of four other Canadians. He was treated with all possible attention; and his guardians received positive orders, only not to permit his escape. Having been abusive to his captors for presuming to detain him, and being a large and powerful man, his arms had been pinioned; and they were proceeding towards St. Charles, when the noise of the firing at St. Denis stimulated the prisoner to attempt his escape. After a short scuffle he loosened one of his arms, jumped from the wagon, and commenced running. He was fired at by the guards, who followed in hot pursuit, soon overtook him, and on his making all the resistance in his power, he was finally killed in the struggle, and almost hacked to pieces with the various weapons of his assailants. His body was thrown into the river, and when soon afterwards discovered was taken to Montreal, and there being interred with all the pomp of a funeral ovation, served the enemies of the popular cause with abundant materials for awakening the old British horror against Frenchmen, jacobins, and blood-thirsty revolutionists. The alarm was sedulously propagated that a "war

of races" had commenced against the British population; and that, should the patriots succeed, their affinity to the country of Robespierre and Danton, would suffice for the establishment, in Canada, of the guillotine, and its feeders, the revolutionary tribunals. The revolting details which this event furnished an occasion of diffusing, were certainly not without an influence on the public mind, both in this country and Canada, injurious to the cause of the patriots, though its occurrence was purely an accident in the main features of the revolt, and, apart from its manner, so clearly justifiable by the code of war, that it would have been inflicted by any belligerent under similar circumstances. The British most fully acted upon the principle throughout the whole insurrection; and for this one instance of military death inflicted by the Canadians, under the supreme provocation of the attempted resistance and escape of a prisoner of war, they, times without number, shot down the defenceless habitants who, without surrendering, had thrown away their arms, and fled in the wretched hope of preserving life and safety alone. Justice, as an historic rule, is surely mutual; and if the British fasten the crime of assassination on the Canadians for the death of Weir, their own hands and cause are trebly polluted with murder, unatoned and inexcusable, in its very foulest form, and of awfully aggravated extent.

The other expedition against Saint Charles, under Col. Wetherall, left their previous station at Chambly, in pursuance of their instructions, at the same hour and day at which Col. Gore had proceeded from Sorel. This force was much stronger, however, consisting of four companies of the Royals, two companies of the 66th, two pieces of artillery, and a small body of cavalry. The difficulties in their night march, from the weather and roads, so retarded their progress, that they only reached Rouville, which is about seven miles from Saint Charles, on the forenoon of Thursday. There finding the bridge removed, they were forced to encamp for the night, and the following day was likewise spent in refreshing the troops and obtaining information. On the morning of Saturday

the whole force, reinforced by an additional company of the Royals, which had followed them from St. Johns, and now amounting to between three hundred and four hundred men, reached St. Charles, and found the insurgents, whose numbers have been variously estimated at from two to three thousand men, strongly posted and intrenched. This large multitude was entirely undisciplined, most of them quite unacquainted with arms, and the whole appear to have had no distinct or definite plan of action. Yet no effort at pacification was made by the powerful force of trained soldiers, armed for their destruction, who now advanced upon them. The result of the conflict that ensued may be readily imagined. Although a spirited fire from the patriots at first checked the troops for a considerable time, and even threw them into confusion, yet the force of discipline and superior armament at length prevailed, and the rout was complete at every point. The merciful idea of subjugating the deluded crowd, so completely in his power, with the least possible effusion of blood, seems to have never occurred to the commander of the British troops. Panting for the applauses of the intolerant faction whose hopes and spirits drew an exhilarating nourishment from the aggravated wretchedness of these profound national calamities, the Conqueror of St. Charles flanked his operations by murderous discharges of grape from his cannon upon the crowded peasantry, and added to the havoc of the bullet and the cannon-ball, the direct carnage of the bayonet and the torch. "They fought very well," says the cool narrative of an eye-witness of the transaction, writing to a New York paper, "until they were charged by the bayonet, and then the butchery was dreadful. Upwards of one hundred were in a barn, full of hay and straw, which was set fire to, and they were burned alive or smothered. The malcontents lost, at least, five hundred men by shot, fire, and water." Another account states that nearly one hundred men were driven into the river, and perished. The village of St. Charles was entirely destroyed in the attack; the houses having been almost all fired by the soldiery. It was stated in the Montreal

Courier that hot shot was used by the artillery in making the attack; but a fact so monstrous really seems out of the bounds of probability.

Wetherall's victory was not, however, in all respects decisive. At the close of the action considerable numbers of the patriots, attracted by the firing from the neighbouring districts, poured into the scene of action, and enabled the broken force of the villagers to rally with such effect, that the British commander deemed it best to content himself with the advantages already gained; and, with the prisoners he had secured, he retreated to Rouville, without attempting any farther prosecution of his victory, or venturing an attack of the force at St. Denis which had defeated Col. Gore.

While these operations were going on, the utmost alarm and anxiety prevailed at Montreal. The defeat of Col. Gore, and the absence of intelligence from Wetherall, occasioned by the disturbed state of the country, produced an abundance of terrifying rumors. The specie from the banks was sent to Quebec, and several thousand stand of arms, with supplies of ammunition, arrived in return from that city. The gaol, crowded with prisoners of every rank, was fortified, and every outlet to the city barricaded but four; and above two thousand volunteers, fully armed and equipped, were called into service. The utmost anxiety prevailed with regard to the course that the United States would probably take in the troubles, as entirely decisive of the contest. It was known that the citizens all along the frontier line, true to the natural sympathies of freemen, were enthusiastically interested in favor of the patriots, and this feeling gave such an immense weight and moral power to the liberal cause, that it was deemed of the utmost importance to dissipate it, at least, as a general fact, in the present juncture of affairs, and before there could be time for disclosing the true sentiments of the American people at large. In Montreal there reside a considerable number of American merchants, who, of course, were strongly interested in the continuance of peace and public order, and a still larger number of individuals descended from Tories expatriated in the progress of the

American revolution, and who appear to have transmitted their love of British rule to their posterity, with their principles. There was, therefore, no difficulty in getting up a meeting which, in the words of its call, comprehensively embraced all citizens of "*American Origin*," for the purpose of counteracting the dangerous tendency of this American sympathy, and of expressing their conviction that the belief which was admitted to exist among the "disaffected;" that their cause met "with the sympathies, and was likely to receive the support of the inhabitants of the United States"—was "unfounded," and who could pass resolutions pledging themselves "to counteract, by constant and earnest effort, the designs of the treasonable and seditious," declaring that all analogy between the American revolution and the present attempt to resist a "mild and equitable local government," was not only "totally unfounded," but "perversely false;"—and who further, actuated by a patriotic desire of "preventing the practice of a gross and wicked imposition" on the citizens of their native, to the prejudice of their adopted land, could pledge themselves to go any length their rulers could desire in defence of their allegiance, and for the restoration of the former state of things under the royal government.

As the news of the insurrection, however, spread into the States, an enthusiastic unanimity of public opinion in favor of the patriot cause forever vindicated the word American from the degradation of even a moment's association with the sentiments thus volunteered in behalf of the country. In Middlebury, Burlington, in St. Albans, Buffalo, Albany, Troy, Rochester, New York, and almost any city and town of note, in the States bordering on the Canadas, public meetings were held, at which the warmest resolutions of sympathy and support in favor of the patriot cause were adopted—and in the places more immediately contiguous to the frontier, no considerations of national policy or discretion could prevent even the most active assistance to the insurgents. Money, provisions, ammunition, and clothing, were collected. Volunteer corps were organized, and committees were appointed to distribute these supplies

to the best advantage. Every trace of the unpleasant recollections engendered by the embittered border hostilities of the late war, was in a moment obliterated by the generous sympathy of freemen, for an attempt, so boldly, though hopelessly made, to secure the inappreciable right of self-government, and to defend the most sacred rights of men against the parricidal tyranny of a legal government which sought to suppress them.

On the twenty-eighth Col. Wetherall continued his retreat to Chambly. On the way, an attempt was made to intercept him at Point Oliviere, by a large number of the insurgents, who were so badly organized, that a few discharges of musketry sufficed to put the whole to flight, leaving two small ship cannon behind them, after which he appears to have met with no further opposition until his arrival at the city.

The return of these "victorious and gallant" troops to Montreal, which they reached on the thirtieth of November, was signalized, if we may credit the papers of that city, with the formalities of a Roman triumph. It is a pity to spoil the language in which the procession was recorded at the time. "It was an interesting sight," says the Montreal Courier, "to the hundreds who crowded on the wharf to witness it. The cavalry landed first, two of them carrying the Liberty pole and cap erected at St. Charles, at the meeting of the six counties, with its wooden tablet bearing the inscription "*A Papineau par ses concitoyens reconnaissans*," the former fragment of the spoils looking sadly like a fool's cap on a barber's pole. The artillery followed, with the two little guns taken at St. Oliviere, in addition to their proper armament. After them rode the commanding officer, followed by the band of the Royals and the infantry,—the first company of whom escorted the prisoners, thirty-two in number."

The happy sarcasm in the above account must have been wonderfully heightened by the reflection, that the simple but significant monument of popular gratitude which was its object—that was purchased for that unfeeling parade by a destruction of human life that appals the heart—guaranteed, by its presence, the suppres-

sion of the treasonable feelings of which it was the emblem, by the almost utter extinction of the simple race who committed the enormity of indulging them by its erection. It is to be hoped that the pleasing emotions it must be calculated to excite in the breast of all loyal Tories, may be gratified in future time, by having an offering so creditable to the national arms, deposited in that proud fane of British glory, where the tattered ensigns of extinguished rebels in Ireland, and of blood-hunted covenanters in Scotland, wave over the tombs of sleeping monarchs in melancholy conjunction with the virgin standards of Bunkers Hill, and the trophies of such days as Trafalgar, Cape Vincent, and Waterloo.

The detachment of Col. Gore, left, since his defeat, inactive at Sorel, was now reinforced with all the disposable force at Montreal. Two field pieces, a supply of congrue rockets, which it may be fairly presumed would prove as effectual in firing cottages, as in the destruction of beleaguered citadels, with a body of the Royal artillery, the Light Company of the 24th, under Capt. Maitland, three companies of the 32nd, under Capt. Brown, one company of the 83d, under Capt. Elmsley, and a squadron of the Montreal Cavalry, amounting altogether, with those already at Sorel, to a force so formidable, that it seems to have occasioned uneasiness in the minds of some who thought that enough of blood had not yet been shed, lest it might disappoint their hopes by overawing resistance. "We are not sanguine enough to expect that any regular opposition will be attempted," is the singular language, certainly warranting such a conclusion, in which the Montreal Journalist announced its departure. It is, however, gratifying to record that these humane expectations were fulfilled, and the expedition marched through the whole of the hostile district without opposition. They made two prisoners at the village of St. Ours, M. J. Dorion, a member of the Provincial Parliament, and Mr. Louis Mogé, a captain of militia, who were sent, with their fellow sufferers, to the gaol of Montreal, on the charge of high treason. As they entered St. Denis, the villagers retired before them, and left these heroes to take unmolested revenge for the mortifica-

tion of their former repulse. The private house of Dr. Wolfred Nelson, and that of his partner, in business, Mr. Deschambault, after being thoroughly plundered by the soldiery, were set on fire. The extensive distillery and outbuildings of these gentlemen, with much valuable machinery, shared the same fate. The taverns of the village, and some other houses whose owners had rendered themselves obnoxious, were also destroyed. They likewise recovered the gun they deserted in their former visit, and the wounded companions they had left behind at the same time. The trophies and munitions of war seized upon the occasion, consisted of about four thousand bushels of good oats and barley, a new steam engine, belonging to Dr. Nelson, valued at two thousand pounds, and various private chattels, estimated, in all, at nearly sixty thousand dollars, which was divided among the captors as prize money. They then continued their march to St. Charles, and along the course of the Richelieu, leaving strong garrisons in the several villages where the patriotic spirit was known to be most rife.

The seizure of Dr. Wolfred Nelson's papers at St. Denis, it was expected would implicate many distinguished reformers much more deeply than the reality evinced. The most important among these was a letter from Mr. Papineau, in which, however political bigotry might make it rank with treason, it is impossible not to perceive a candour and unsuspecting frankness, combined with a moderation, that force on the unprejudiced mind an irresistible conviction of the honor and political integrity of this upright man, utterly remote from the bloody intentions of which he was accused. After speaking of the strong discontents in Upper Canada, occasioned by the unequal representation of the province, he goes on to say, as we find the letter translated in the *New York Courier and Enquirer*, a journal in no respect friendly to his cause.

"I see that with them, as with us, without concert, and without a comparison of views, their young men are procuring arms, and accustoming themselves to their use. The excitement is intense. They wish to send a deputation of seven members to a convention, or, as they call it, a

Congress of the two provinces, in which they should prepare a project of a purely democratic constitution, and tell England that this is what we must have under her administration, if we have justice—and independently of her if she will not concede it. As for myself, I am of opinion that our plan of non-consumption and agitation, which will render the expenses of the colony more burdensome to England by the necessity of an increased military force, and the diminution of her commerce, is by far the best policy to pursue for the present. Continue to push it as vigorously as you can." To wish for a permanent standing army and a large increase of the regular soldiery—and to recommend measures which would render this necessary, and awaken the vigilance of authority, is certainly a new development of treason, and a very probable method of overturning an established government.

Another proof of the exterminating treason hatching by the patriots, not merely against the Government, but the lives of the whole British race, was found and exultingly announced in the following childish remarks from a son of Dr. Nelson only fourteen years of age, writing from school to his father.

"I wish," he says, "that it will do well and without any noise, which I hate very much, except with the other side. I believe that the prediction by that man named Bourgeoi, will be accomplished, which is, that the province would be all covered with blood and dead bodies."

On this school-boy letter, and capable of an interpretation, so obviously innocent, the *Montreal Herald* was not ashamed to make the infamous remark, even at a time when the gentleman thus spoken of was in gaol at Montreal; and as another *Montreal* journal has it, through the culpable leniency of the Government, uselessly "fattening for the gallows," that "death on the scaffold is the best example that such a father can give to such a child."

The whole causes and extent of the insurrection were now in fact, plainly discernible, and the tyrannical severity of the colonial government, stood darkly forth to the eyes of all reflecting men, as utterly

unjustifiable,—except on the principles of a code of policy, which it would be dishonor, in the present age, to associate with the name of government,—as they were awfully unnecessary. The plea of self-preservation cannot be used, as an excuse for the remorseless cruelty with which it made its tiger spring upon the defenceless population, guilty only of the crime of seeking the political regeneration of their native land. “All that had been done” says one of the ablest journals in the American Union—and, which did itself high honor by the candor and ability which it treated the Canada difficulties throughout,—in reviewing the events we have recapitulated, “prior to the issuing of secret orders by the government against some of the best and purest men in the province, was through peaceable and public assemblages of the citizens. They conceived that they had great and crying grievances to complain of—oppression and insolence had driven them to public declarations of what they conceived to be the invasions of great and unalienable rights and to the abuses of power—but they had resorted to no violence, or menace, or organized hostility, beyond that of assembling in a public and constitutional manner. In this respect, they had not proceeded so far, by half, as is every day permitted in the mother country, and is justified, and indeed guaranteed by the British constitution.

“The first exhibition of the popular feeling, beyond these peaceable and legal assemblages of the people, was caused by the arrest of Dr. Davignon and Mr. Demaray, on a charge of high treason, at St. Johns. These citizens were not only arrested and their dwellings invaded by a hired soldiery, but they were carried towards Montreal by a circuitous route, in an open wagon, thirty-six miles, (when they might have been taken by the railroad in a few hours,) their hands and feet in irons, and *with halters round their bodies!* Such an outrage naturally exasperated the people, their neighbours, and they gathered on the route, and rescued the prisoners.

“This was followed, not by a general

rising of the people, but by the muster of government troops at Montreal, by the issuing of additional warrants, by numerous arrests of unarmed and unoffending citizens in every direction, and by sending bands of soldiers to enforce the arrest of Dr. Nelson and other proscribed citizens, whose neighbours had assembled in the vicinity of St. Denis and St. Charles, (the former the residence of Dr. N.) and resisted the execution of the warrant which they well knew, if allowed to be enforced, was a sure prelude to the ignominious and violent death of one of the most public-spirited and valuable citizens of the province.

A small portion of the farming population of the province, did, under these circumstances, resist the approaches of the government troops, with a bravery, and, at St. Denis, a degree of success, which nothing but a high sense of the wrong and oppression could have induced. But here resistance ceased. The people returned to their homes; and their leading friends, driven from their country and families by charges of treason, and large sums offered for their apprehension, have sought a refuge, in several instances, in the American territory.

“Take for instance, the single case of Mr. Papineau. He is either concealed in the province, or an exile in these States. This gentleman, beloved for his many virtues, of great private and personal worth, of large fortune, for the last twenty successive years elected Speaker of the Assembly by nearly the unanimous votes of the representatives of the people, and known to all who have visited the Canadas as not less the liberal and enlightened advocate of the rights of the people, than the disinterested and able friend of humanity, has been *charged* with high treason, and a price set upon his head! And yet, so far as we can learn, nothing has been or can be brought against him, except that of peaceably assembling with his fellow-countrymen; and of urging and counselling what were conceived to be essential political reforms in the government!”*

It is important to bear these facts in

* Albany Argus, Dec. 15, 1837. We must also associate the New York Express in the honorable praise with which we have introduced the above extract.

mind, to obtain a correct view of the relative position of the parties. In fact, we believe that the strongest and most plausible argument which the friends and advocates of the measures we have been describing have been able to advance, is, that Revolution and Independence were certainly contemplated as the future designs of the reform party; and that the Government by forcing them into premature insurrection, and being thus enabled to employ force in effectually crushing their projects, whatever they might be, in their minutest embryo, acted with a masterly policy—the full benefit of which, to their cause, we are not disposed to dispute.

Many of those who had abandoned their homes, on the military occupation of the district of Six Counties, by Col. Gore, retired more from terror and despair, than with a view to any concerted action, or ultimate object, to the north of the river St. Lawrence, on the opposite side of Montreal, where common feelings of sympathy and oppression had banded the entire population in their cause.—Thither all thought of resistance, or opposition, in any other quarter being at an end, the Executive prepared to follow them.

"Thus, within the short space of eight days, have forty-five miles in extent of the most populous and wealthy portion of this district been traversed in arms by Her Majesty's troops," is the triumphant language with which the Government journal, of Montreal, sums up the result of this brief campaign. Language which, for point and effect, might be used by Southey or Napier, in recording the most brilliant events of successful war against a foe, and on a field where military glory might indeed be won.

Lord Gosford followed up these military operations by issuing, on the twenty-ninth of December, a proclamation to the habitants, urging them to return to their allegiance, and calling upon all loyal subjects to continue steadfast in their preparations to maintain the authority of the Sovereign, and counteract the treasonable designs of

the disaffected. In this document, the Governor reminded the people of a blessing of which the experience of the last fortnight had both sufficiently proved the benefit and the end, that the "expense" of their "military defence" was defrayed by Great Britain; and summed up the Executive opinion of the patriot cause in a few words, by saying to the people, as a finale, "but the demands of your leaders are insatiable, the language of reform has speciously concealed the designs of revolution,"—of course sufficiently justifying himself for all the overt and un-concealed aggressions against life and liberty, to which he had so unscrupulously resorted. This proclamation, however, contained only exhortations and threats, and was, therefore, far from satisfactory to the party whose warmest visions, if we might judge from the tone of a portion of the Montreal press, were of gibbets and halters, and who exclaimed against delaying the trials of the State prisoners, as a want of State economy in only "keeping traitors to fatten them for the gallows!" It was derided as inane, temporizing, and weak, and the Governor himself, who could issue it at such a time, was scorned as "our miserable ruler." Such representations were not without their effect upon Lord Gosford; and on the fifth of December, he proclaimed martial law in the district of Montreal, and committed the execution of his decree, for good or evil, to the unscrupulous conscience of Sir John Colborne, by "death or otherwise for the suppression and punishment of all rebels in said district." At the same time, he resorted to the horrid measure of placing a price on the head of such leaders of the patriot cause as had not been arrested; and his proclamation to this effect only differed from the similar revolting measures of exploded despotism, by leaving the usual phrase "dead or alive," as a condition of their delivery, to be supplied by the captors, according to circumstances, and their understanding of the warrant authorising the unnatural prize.* This proclamation was so far suc-

*The following are the gentlemen to whom this high compliment, so much more honourable than many a patent of British peerage, was paid. One thousand pounds currency (or four thousand dollars) for Louis Joseph Papineau.

cessful as to cause the arrest, soon after, of Dr. Wolfred Nelson, who, in endeavouring to make his escape after the defeat of St. Charles, had endured such incredible hardships for nine days in the woods, that he suffered severely while in prison from their effects, and of Mr. Pierre Amiot and Dr. Alphonso Gauvin, who were all, of course, consigned to the common gaol.

The last struggle of disturbance in the country south of Montreal, was met and put down with equal spirit and success by the loyal inhabitants of the province themselves, acting as volunteers. A body of about forty or fifty of the insurgents had retired across the line of the United States to the town of Highgate, Vermont, where they had been leisurely organized and armed, and on the sixth of December, with two cannon, and escorting a considerable supply of arms and ammunition for the rebel service, they entered the province with a view of securing the village of Philipsburgh, and thus opening the communication with L'Acadie, where there were many partisans of the cause. Capt. O. J. Kempt, of the Shefford Volunteers, being apprized of their intention, hastily raised a number of the neighboring inhabitants, who were attached to the British connection, and met the invading force at Moore's Corner, about two miles and a half from Philipsburgh. A sharp skirmish ensued, which ended in the defeat of the insurgents, leaving their cannon, a large supply of bullets and powder, and about seventy muskets, with two standards, in possession of their victors. This party was headed by Julien Gagnon, of L'Acadie, whose nephew was wounded and left behind, and Robert Shore Milnes Bouchette, of Quebec, editor of the *Liberal*, published there, and a very influential personage in his party. The latter was

severely wounded, and fell also in the hands of the victors. This effective little skirmish, slight as it was, showed such a spirit among the Canadian loyalists as served to check, effectually, farther demonstrations of hostile invasion from this part of the United States frontier.

In the county of Two Mountains, on the river Ottawa, above Montreal, the stricken insurgents driven from their residences by the victorious troops, made their last stand. The progress of events since the commencement of hostilities had contributed to swell this multitude gradually to a considerable host. The most of them were kept together by a warm feeling of attachment to the cause of their party, and many others were drawn to the mass from various motives of fear or curiosity, and some doubtless to improve the opportunities such occasions always present to adventurers, to promote unjustifiable designs by suitable means. The leaders of the multitude were not exactly known; but a Swiss officer named Girod exercised a principal military authority, and was very active in drilling the men to some kind of military exercise, and there were besides among them many of the proscribed leaders of the reform party who, if they ever, even, entertained any other ultimate objects, now really seem to have resisted the exterminating measures of the Government in self-defence alone, and to have given up all idea of armed revolution, or opposition.

The principal forces of the insurgents being stationed at the village of St. Eustache and Grand Brulé, two companies of the 32nd regiment, and a detachment of volunteer cavalry, were sent, on the fourth of December, to *Isle Jesus*, for the purpose of taking such a position as would enable them to maintain a communication between head-quarters and the

Five hundred pounds each, for Dr. Wolfred Nelson, of St. Denis; Thomas Storrow Brown, of Montreal; Edmund B. O'Callaghan, of Montreal, M. P. P.; Joseph T. Drolet, of St. Marc, M. P. P.; Jean J. Girouard, of St. Benôit, M. P. P.; William H. Scott, of St. Eustache, M. P. P.; Edward E. Rodier, of Montreal, M. P. P.; Amury Girod, an alien; Jean O'Chenier, of Two Mountains;

And one hundred pounds each, for Pierre Paul Demaray, of St. Johns; Joseph Francois Davignon, of St. Johns; Julien Gagnon, of L'Acadie; Pierre Amiot, of Vercheres, M. P. P.; Louis Perrault, of Montreal; Dr. Alphonso Gauvin, of Montreal; Louis Gauthier, of Montreal; Rodolphe Desrivieres, of Montreal.

lake of the Two Mountains, and Sir John Colborne, reserving to himself the glory of finally suppressing the rebellion by driving the revolted peasantry from their last strong hold, set about organizing an expedition on such a scale as would prevent the possibility of failure.

PART SECOND.

Upper Canada—Sir Francis Head and his policy—W. L. Mackenzie—Plan of the intended revolt—March of the Insurgents to Toronto—Proceedings of the Executive, and defeat of the rebels at Montgomery house—Subsequent measures of the Governor—Departure of the army under Sir John Colborne for St. Eustache—Description of the village—Total defeat of the insurgents, and destruction of their houses—Proceedings at St. Benoit, and return of the troops to Montreal—Remarks on the Insurrection—Proceedings in the United States—Buffalo—Navy Island—and the army of Volunteers—Destruction of the Caroline—Proceedings of the American authorities in relation to this event—American Expeditions—British Parliament—Conclusion.

While Sir John Colborne was yet organizing his expedition against the few insurgents of Lower Canada who survived the bloody doings at St. Charles, intelligence was received of events at Toronto, which proved that the whole province of Upper Canada had all but slipped through the fingers of its British rulers, and that it was mainly indebted for its connection to the empire solely to the indiscretion and timidity of a few individuals quite unworthy of the crisis which they had brought about.

With the same general causes which produced the prevalent dissatisfaction throughout the lower provinces, there were several circumstances that gave a peculiar and even deeper character to the discontent of the inhabitants of Upper Canada. These were embodied in a "Declaration of Grievances," dated July 31, 1837, in which the British Government were given distinctly to understand that revolt would be the consequence of the measures the colonial Executive were pursuing, if much longer persisted in. Sir Francis Head, though an accomplished *litterateur*, when placed in the administration of the province soon proved himself, in many respects, unfit for his position as a ruler. Weak, vain, and self-confident, he knew not how to deal with principles in

stemming the stormy elements of political opposition. He became in consequence, the leader of a party, and his policy soon exhibited a character so variable and insincere, that he forever forfeited the confidence of a large majority of the population: while being at the same time of a bold and resolute disposition, he frequently supported his measures by a specious appeal to a public opinion already organized in his favor; conduct which marred the best results of political candor by only braving and exasperating the reality of the judgment which it seemed to court. His administration soon produced, therefore, in the province, all the pernicious effects with which a union of purblind party prejudices, and the narrowest party predilections, with the whole executive and administrative power, could not fail to create. This was strongly apparent on his dissolution of the parliament, when the unequal distribution of the elective franchise enabled him to secure a majority, that seemed to give the most effectual popular sanction to his course, when it was in reality condemned in the strongest manner by the great majority of the people.

The character of the population in Upper Canada is far different from that of the lower province. Generally educated,

shrewd, and intelligent, forming opinions for themselves, and under the constant example of the value of self-government in the neighboring republic of the United States, their first election, when constitutional opposition to the colonial government seemed fruitless, was for entire Independence and a separate political organization. This party had many able, highly respected, and zealous men in its ranks, whose character and talents could not fail to exercise a powerful influence on any state of society in which they might be placed.

The most prominent was Wm. L. Mackenzie, who, at the head of the most influential press in the province, and of a bold earnestness and sincerity of character, coupled with an untiring devotion to the popular cause, had attained a degree of popularity which gave him a political weight in the province that enabled him to cope successfully with the Governor in the arduous game of party opposition; and finally, to brave him in the more perilous chances of physical conflict. Nearly two thousand societies were organized throughout the province, all of which were prepared to second, with implicit reliance, the first movement of their leaders for revolt; and this extreme measure, from the moment that Mackenzie and his advisers saw the minority of Sir Francis hopelessly in the ascendant, he unhesitatingly resolved on adopting. His partisans throughout the country were put, as far as possible, in a state of military organization, somewhat resembling Tone's celebrated United Irishmen. The chairmen of the different associations were to assume the rank of colonels in the contemplated insurrection, and their secretaries that of captains; they assembled frequently in shooting matches to perfect themselves in the use of fire arms; and by repeated personal visits and the untiring activity of his press,—always keeping within the bounds of the law,—this resolute popular leader had thoroughly prepared the reformers for the daring political extremity of armed insurrection.

The plan of the revolt was, that on the night of Thursday, December seventh, the reformers, from all parts of the country, should assemble at Montgomery's

tavern, three miles back of Toronto, march upon the city, and, in conjunction with their partisans there, make the Governor prisoner, and seizing the City Hall, distribute four thousand stand of arms which had been deposited there among the people. They were then to take possession of the garrison, organize a provisional government, and proclaim the Province an independent republic. A plan so daring, as to contemplate the overthrow, in a moment, of a powerful and organized government, improbable as it may seem, does not appear to have been so chimerical, as at first sight, with the slender resources at the command of the reformers, might be supposed. Contrary to the usual history of popular conspiracies, the ultimate object of the reformers seems to have been concealed effectually from the Executive till the very moment of explosion; and so confident were the seditious leaders of success, that they were sanguine in their expectation that a revolution could be effected, and a British government subverted without the effusion of blood; a confession which certainly invalidates our confidence either in their capacity or their candour.

The movement, however, went on with the expected success until it was precipitated, either by the treachery or criminal indiscretion of one of their leaders, who altered, by private orders, the time of action from Thursday to Monday, and who brought, in consequence, a large body of unsupported, unexpected, and half-armed insurgents, to the city, on the latter day. Mr. Mackenzie heard only of this fatal movement when it was too late for remedy, but, with the natural intrepidity of his character, he resolved to make the most of it. The men who arrived at the place of rendezvous, tired, hungry, and ill-humored at the trick which had been played upon them, were reanimated by the enthusiasm of this fearless leader, and were induced by his persuasions to await the chances of their situation, rather than disperse.

Yonge street is the main northern entrance to Toronto. This Mackenzie immediately guarded, to prevent all communication with the city, and in the absence of any intelligence from his friends, proceeded himself, accompanied by a few

trusty comrades, to ascertain from the Executive state of preparation, whether he would be warranted in striking a *coup de main* for the city with his handful of men. Vague rumors of this extraordinary movement had, however, reached Toronto, and many of the loyal citizens had proceeded in various directions towards the country, as scouts, to ascertain their truth. Two of these, Mr. Powell, now Mayor of the city, and a merchant named McDonnell, were riding up Yonge street, when they were met by Mackenzie and his party, who instantly made them prisoners, and sent them forward under the charge of two of his companions, a Capt. Anthony Anderson and Mr. Sheppard, to the head-quarters. On the way, however, Powell, watching his opportunity, shot Anderson, his guard, dead upon the spot, and rode at his topmost speed back to the city. In passing, Mackenzie, who was behind, attempted unsuccessfully to intercept him, and only escaped with his life from the pistol of the fugitive missing fire.

The whole matter was now out. Powell made directly for the residence of the Governor;—who was asleep, utterly unconscious of the danger that awaited him, and put Sir Francis in possession of his alarming information. The bells of the city were immediately rung, the loyalists summoned *en masse*, and supplied with arms from the City Hall, to which Sir Francis repaired as the best place of security, and at the same time removed his family to a steamboat in the river, in case of reverse. So great was the alarm, and the uncertainty as to the actual strength of the insurgents, that prevailed, that scarcely three hundred persons could be found to answer their Governor's summons to arms. The vast majority of the population either favored the attempt, or awaited the issue of a struggle, to join the victorious side; and if the insurgent force had pushed boldly on, there cannot be a doubt but that the city, and with it the Executive Government, would have fallen, for the time being, into their hands. But, as has been remarked by an eminent historian, in dangerous enterprises delay is but defeat; so in this instance the decisive moment passed by, never to return. In the course of the night a distinguished veteran British offi-

cer, Col. Moodie, was killed by the insurgents. He was coming towards Toronto, and, attempting to dispute the passage of their military lines at Montgomery's tavern, was shot by the sentinel. The following day does not appear to have added any strength to the beleaguered Governor, while the force of the insurgents was largely increased; and, dreading the effects of an attack, Sir Francis sent a flag of truce to the camp of Mackenzie, demanding what he required. This message was borne by the hands of Dr. Rolph, the secret Executive of the rebels, and of Dr. Baldwin, their confederate, and created the impression that they had deserted the cause. The answer "Independence, and a National Convention to arrange details" was returned; and Mackenzie, still destitute of intelligence, and confounded by the unexpected capacity in which the principal advisers to his present course had visited him, deemed the Governor's message conclusive proof of his weakness, and immediately marched for the city. But the fatal indecision, which so often mars enterprise led by inferior minds, at critical moments of their fate, still doomed the movements of the insurgents to defeat. Their further progress, when near the city, was countermanded until the evening,—when it was tried again; and as might have been expected from such troops, guided by such leaders, the first attempt at resistance threw them into confusion. An advanced guard of the city volunteers poured a volley into the advancing rebels, which was scarcely returned by the more resolute of the band, ere the whole body had taken, panic-stricken, to their heels, and utterly refused Mackenzie's earnest entreaties to return to the attack. That night, and Wednesday, desertion thinned their ranks, and brought enthusiasm with reinforcements to the Governor. The Speaker of the House of Assembly, Mr. McNabb, immediately raised his district and rushed to the rescue; others followed his example, and the best spirit prevailed. Mackenzie, however, with unabated hope, still looked for Thursday night, when, according to the original plan of the insurrection, he expected the arrival of high-spirited reinforcements—had turned.

expresses of the endangered Governor, were now pouring into the city, from Niagara, Hamilton, Oakville, and other loyal quarters, and soon enabled Sir Francis to set the matter at rest, by ordering an attack on the main position of the insurgents at Montgomery's tavern.

On the morning of Thursday, December 7th, the loyal militia, under the command of Col. McNabb, marched forward to the assault, in three columns, supported by artillery. They found the enemy strongly posted in a wood near the tavern, and immediately attacked them, pouring in upon them a well-directed fire of artillery and musketry. This, though borne with much bravery for some time, and returned with considerable spirit by the riflemen, soon put the undisciplined crowd of insurgents into confusion, which ended in their total rout, without much loss to either side. Mackenzie and many other leaders fled in safety to the United States, and numbers who could not escape were taken prisoners, and were generously pardoned by Sir Francis Head, who now felt his position secure, and could afford to be generous. Some houses of the loyalists having been burned by the insurgents, revenge was taken by committing every one which had harbored them to the flames. As might be expected, the extensive printing establishment of Mr. Mackenzie, in Toronto, was wholly destroyed.

Even yet, had there been a leader of sufficient conduct and intrepidity to take advantage of the occasion, this momentary insurrection might have been prolonged into successful revolution. As night came on, every road leading to Toronto was found crowded with reinforcements for the insurgents; but who, finding how matters had gone, wisely made a virtue of necessity, and declared they were coming forward at the call of danger to sustain the government. If the pretence was shallow, the Executive was far too shrewd to perceive it.

Thus ended, as far as Canada was concerned, this bold and evanescent attempt at armed revolution. The excitement rolled into the contiguous regions of the United States; and there working on an excitable and enthusiastic population, produced events which will demand hereafter our

attention for a moment; but every reflecting mind felt convinced that in the dispersion of the insurgents of Yonge street, all prospects of present success to their cause had utterly ceased. The subsequent measures of the Governor were much more exceptionable than the prudence and conduct which he exhibited when in contact with danger. The gaols were crowded with suspected citizens, as well as the more distinguished prisoners, and an unmanly and unlawful use was made of the Executive power to banish one of the most eminent citizens of the State, Marshall S. Bidwell, Esq., from the province forever. The militia were now quartered in the most disaffected districts. The city was garrisoned by similar troops, taken into service for the occasion; and it is honorable praise for Sir Francis Head, that with far higher provocation, and on the juster grounds of premeditated treason and open revolt against the existing government, he did not emulate, in his measures against the insurgents, the bloody example of the rulers over the sister province. The forms of law were for a moment suspended, by the force of open war, to resume their mild and salutary control the moment it had passed and though he vindicated the authority of his sovereign and repressed a dangerous insurrection, he had the virtue to abhor the military mercy that gloried in the wholesale carnage of a deluded and defenceless peasantry, and which could drive the widow and the fatherless it had bereaved, at the bayonet's point, to take shelter from the flames of their burning cottages, in the snows of a Canadian winter. It was his worst crime, and the worst result of his policy, that he made of this slight insurrection, an instrument to foster a ferocious spirit of disgraceful party proscription—never practicable but in those sad times of national disaster, when law is equally violated by the rulers and the ruled—which drew lines of unrelenting hate between masses of citizens, and enabled a small faction, who found their highest civil duty in an uncompromising devotion to the Executive, to monopolize all the favor and authority of Government, at the very time when they had become its worst subjects, and violated its every principle.—

This is the system which, in the dependencies of England, has frequently perverted the sacred duties of delegated power into that legal despotism—the fatal excess of limited monarchy—which has so often produced a hideous anomaly between British government and British law, and which is the most oppressive and most odious form in which human tyranny ever was developed.

To return again to the Lower Province: The commander-in-chief of the British left Montreal for St. Eustache on the 13th of December. The expedition consisted of detachments from the 1st Royals, under Lieut. Wetherall; the 32d and 83d regular regiments, under Colonels Maitland and Dundas; the Volunteer Montreal Rifle Corps, under Capt. Leclerc, and a strong squadron of horse. This formidable force was accompanied by six pieces of artillery, full served, commanded by Major Jackson, and amounted to about two thousand men. Their departure was made an occasion of gratifying the loyalists of Montreal by a demonstration of the Government strength displayed in all the imposing forms of military parade. The long array of armed soldiery in the full equipment of field service, defiled through the streets, with their colours displayed, and to the inspiring strains of military music. Each piece of artillery drawn by its complement of horses, and attended by its artillery-men and ammunition wagons, lengthened out the procession, and oppressed with awful forebodings many a wretched heart among those who knew too well the defenceless crowd of deluded peasantry against whom this terrific armament of destruction was directed. The commander-in-chief, surrounded by his staff, and escorted by two hundred dragoons who brought up the rear, had, however, his full meed of gratification in hearing shout prolonged on shout, from the eager crowds with whom the journalists of Montreal have peopled the streets on the occasion, which testified the public sense of the abundant completeness of these irresistible preparations for the accomplishment of his mission. Long trains of carriages, and wagons loaded with congreve rockets, and every description of military ammunition, baggage, pro-

visions, timbers, tools of various kinds, with workmen to build bridges, cut roads, and remove obstructions, followed the mighty host, with a revival of that opulence of military equipment on which British generals were wont to pride themselves in the iron campaigns of the Peninsula, as their surest guarantee of success in meeting the veterans of Napoleon; but now, it was evident, to be wielded with full sincerity of purpose against a far different foe.

The troops, according to the plan of the campaign, took up their quarters, the first night of their march, at St. Martins. The main body of the insurgents were posted at St. Eustache, and against this point it was resolved, in the first instance, to direct an attack.

The village of St. Eustache, one of the most beautiful and picturesque of those lovely rural settlements with which the early French emigrants studded the agricultural districts of the Canadas, is situated about twenty miles north of Montreal, on a branch of the romantic Ottawa, *la riviere des mille isles*, as the French expressively call the island-studded stream. A winding rivulet runs through the centre of the village to join the Ottawa some distance below. On the tongue of land formed by these waters stood the parish church, a large stone building, whose two glittering spires, covered with tin formed a conspicuous feature in the landscape; and which, in the massive solidity of its construction, and the elegant decorations of its interior, sufficiently attested the good catholicity of the habitants. Near this was the house of the Curé, a large edifice also of stone. At some little distance, on an eminence, fronting the Curé's house, or presbytery, as it was called, stood the manor-house, a handsome residence, two stories high, built of cut stone. Several other good houses, arranged so as to form a large square, composed the village, the church being nearly in the centre. Among these was the residence of Mr. W. H. Scott, one of the representatives in parliament of the county of Two Mountains, and Dr. Chenier, the patriot commander, who was greatly beloved by his friends, and who most fully, by a rare strength of mind, and eleva-

tion of character, merited his popularity. His house was situated on a point of land opposite the church, where a bridge over the river connected both sides of the village. A large stone convent, or female seminary, recently finished, was situated at some little distance from the church. The population of the county of Two Mountains, in which the village of Saint Eustache is situated, were, for the most part, enthusiastically devoted to the cause of reform, and the first idea of resistance to the Government at this point arose from their determination not to permit the arrest of their proscribed leaders, Dr. Chenier, and the county representatives, Messrs. Girouard and Scott, for each of whom, it will be recollected, a reward of five hundred pounds was offered by the Government. Resistance once organized, formed a nucleus, round which were soon gathered all the combustible materials of the neighbourhood, and created a temporary point where the hopes of many a fugitive from the banks of the Richelieu were glad to take refuge. Offensive warfare, or systematized rebellion, as far as this assemblage was concerned, seem entirely out of the question; their numbers never exceeded twelve hundred, of whom the great majority were almost entirely without arms.

On the morning of the fourteenth December, the immense force we have described was put on march for the village. In consequence of the weakness of the ice, the main body of the troops were compelled to make a detour to St. Rose, where the ice was found sufficiently strong to bear the artillery, and where, accordingly, the whole regular force crossed from Isle Jesus to the main land, lengthening their march about six miles, and making it about twelve o'clock at noon before they arrived at St. Eustache. As the large force advancing against them crossed over to the village, its extent and character seem, for the first time, to have impressed upon the habitants the incredible inequality of the approaching conflict, and by far the largest portion of them, about seven hundred in number, belonging to the neighbouring villages of St. Benoît and St. Scholastique, apprehensive for the safety of their homes, or, more

probably, fearful of the result, went off in a body under the command of Messrs. Girouard and Chartier. Not quite three hundred remained, and this devoted handful, animated by the courage and example of the brave Chenier, hastily throwing themselves into the strongest houses, prepared to defend them to the last extremity. Dr. Chenier, with about eighty determined men; took possession of the church, barricaded the doors, and stationed themselves at the windows to await the coming of the troops.

It seemed due to the greater distinction of the commander, that the doings at St. Eustache should transcend in their enormities the memorable events at Saint Charles; and "our invaluable Sir John Colborne," as the tory presses delighted to call him, took his measures to prevent the escape of even a single soul. Two field pieces were first directed to open their fire upon the church, and another was sent round in the rear of the village, and stationed where it commanded the street leading directly to the front door of the same edifice. The three regiments and the cavalry, in the mean time, made a circuit round the village in rear; and took up positions to intercept the fugitives, when they should be compelled to abandon their position; while a party of volunteers were spread out on the ice in the front of the village, where they had crossed, thus completely hemming in the insurgents on every side. No offer of mercy or attempt at reconciliation appears to have been made; and a steady fire from the cannon on the church, convent, and presbytery, soon evinced the manner in which the assailants were resolved to terminate the affair. Besides being very inefficiently armed, there was a great want of ammunition in the ill-appointed ranks of the peasantry, which was soon apparent in the slackened fire with which the unceasing volleys of the assailants were returned from the houses in the square. This emboldened their advance, and in a short time the convent was in possession of the troops, and immediately set on fire. The priest's house soon shared the same fate, and their miserable garri- sons retreating from the gathering flames into the cellars, were either stifled by the

smoke, or rushed upon their remorseless foes, and found a more merciful, and as certain a death, from the bayonet or the ball. It is stated that one individual only, named Felix Paquin, nephew of the parish priest, escaped from this complication of horrors, of all the defenders of these buildings. The church, under the indomitable Chenier, was soon all that remained to the patriots; and the great strength of the walls, assisting the courage of its inmates, enabled them for some time to withstand all the efforts of the soldiery. The artillery at length effected a breach, and the assailants rushing in applied fire to the building, which was now half filled with wounded men. The leader, and the few men that survived with him, in the face of the fate now so certain, still maintained the fight of lions in despair; jumping through a window into the grave-yard, himself and nearly all his followers soon fell beneath the repeated volleys which were poured in upon them in this last foothold of the brave.

A little before dusk the work of destruction was complete, and a more awful sight was never the result of the relentless code of war. The houses of that beautiful village were wrapt in flame. The church-yard and the convent were heaped with the dead; and the numerous bodies consumed in the houses, if we may credit some accounts, loaded the air with an insufferable stench, that sickened many a brave heart compelled to bear a part in the proceedings. In the clear night of the Canadian winter, the flames, distinctly seen at Montreal, sufficiently telegraphed to the city the result of the expedition. The correspondent of the *Courier*, writing from the spot, confirmed the intelligence next morning with expressive brevity. "Such a scene you never witnessed—it must prove an awful example. The artillery opened at half-past one. Every thing was over, except the shooting of a few fugitives, at half-past three." A despatch which tells something more than the *veni, vidi, vici*, of the Roman general.

The destruction of life in this horrid affair can never be ascertained. Above one hundred were taken prisoners, and nearly all the remainder must have perished in

the flames or the fight. It is believed that very few escaped. The loss of the troops was one, only. The game was a secure one for them, and they played it out. The remainder of the battle evening was spent in improving the victory. Frightful stories found their way into the American newspapers of the subsequent atrocities of this fatal day, and indiscriminate plunder and *violation* were said to have completed the aggravated scene. Plundering there certainly was, but let us hope that exaggeration has lent a deeper coloring to military horrors already too black for the honor of humanity.

Dr. Chenier, who fell in this conflict, was, by the account of all knew him, a man of the noblest qualities, and admirably fitted to give strength and lustre to the hopeless cause in which he was engaged. Neither his name nor his death could save his remains from insult. The heart was torn from his breast, and the body, divided into quarters exposed on a counter in the village, to the gaze of the troops, and the unhappy survivors of the heroic traitor's cause. His young and accomplished wife was yet in the neighbourhood.

The following day Sir John Colborne followed up his success. At the village of St. Benôit, or Grand Brulé, the last remains of the patriot force were assembled. But here he had an easier task. Terror had taken possession of every heart, and the sacrifice of St. Eustache had deeply struck the memorable lesson of its example. The troops had scarcely proceeded on their way before their general was met by a deputation from St. Benôit, who came to offer unconditional submission for themselves, and the surrounding country; and as he advanced every house had a white flag displayed from the window, though no inhabitant waited to know his doom. All were assembled at the village; and now reduced to three hundred, the shrinking multitude presented themselves to the commander, each with the same symbol of peace and sorrow in his hand. Life was spared to the defenceless penitents; but the General's tactics could award no more, and their unconditional submission purchased for them only the bitterness of feeling that they had better have died with

arms in their hands, like their exterminated compatriots. Every one whom it pleased the troops to consider a leader was arrested, and such had the consolation to find that surrender had saved them from the chances of the bullet, only to substitute the chances of the gallows. The General next commanded the houses of Mr. Girouard and other prominent citizens, to be burnt; and his followers, emulating his example, added the rest of the village to the bonfire, the whole having been first thoroughly plundered of every thing available. Detachments of the troops were sent, after the destruction of these villages, to scour the rest of the district. All resistance had ceased. At St. Scholastique, seven miles from Grand Brûlé, the inhabitants met the commanding officer with white flags in their hands, and threw down their arms; and at Carillon, six miles west of St. Eustache, a similar spectacle was exhibited; yet, in each case, many houses were committed to the flames, and their inmates driven for shelter wherever they could find it. The insurrection was completely quelled. A few only of the leaders had escaped, and the good fortune of the commander was crowned with a satisfactory disposition of some of these before he had finished. Girod, finding himself on the point of being captured, blew out his brains with a pistol, and left his captors only the minor gratification of mutilating his lifeless trunk, by cutting off his head, and driving a stake through his body. Scott was seized by a small party of dragoons, who, stimulated by the prospect of five hundred pounds, never gave up the chase until they secured their victim, and were recommended for the act to the Executive, in the official despatches of their commander.

On the sixteenth of December, Sir John Colborne returned to Montreal, and escorted by the Montreal Cavalry and Queen's Light Dragoons, rode through the city to receive the applauses that greeted the return of the Conqueror. The following day, being Sunday, the greater part of his force also reached the city at different intervals. When Col. Wetherall and his Royals returned, with the additional laurels of another campaign upon their brow, escorting one hundred and five pri-

soners, the fruits of this second victory, crowds of citizens hallowed the day of rest, by going out to meet them, and cheered the conquerors the whole way to their barracks.

Thus ended Sir John Colborne's expedition to St. Eustache. *Solitudinem fecit, pacemque vocavit.* He created a desert and called it peace! The insurrection was, indeed suppressed, but Canada has not been strengthened to the British crown. Such events as these will hardly find a place in the proud pages of English story; but deep, deep will they burn into the heart of her distant province, and the blood of these patriot martyrs, so profusely shed at the altar of royalty, on an American soil, will hallow their cause with millions of the free, and forever dishonor the escutcheon of England's Virgin Queen, with an ineffaceable stain of blood, which, in this hemisphere, at least, will link a name auspicious to all the rest of her empire, with the doings of the TYRANT KING who left his parricidal print of blood upon the American soil, to form the seal of its freedom to all future time.

As far as the Canadian territory and population were concerned, all trace of an insurrection which at first seemed so alarming was now effectually suppressed. Indeed, subsequent events proved that the Government had abundant reason to be satisfied with the result of the vast moral and political responsibility it had so boldly assumed, in precipitating a resistance which enabled it, with the arm of power, to overwhelm as treason and rebellion an opposition of principles, interests, and feelings, irreconcilably hostile to their policy, which was rapidly wearing away from them, if it had not already destroyed, the respect, the attachment, and even the allegiance of the great body of the people. As in every case of unsuccessful resistance to organized authority, the power of the Government was much strengthened by the event; and the supporters of the popular cause, in the dejection of their defeat, will most probably feel cowed for years to come from all attempt at serious opposition. Yet, with all the advantages of power and influence and preconcerted attack, such was the character of this insurrection, that had there been a leader of

conduct and firmness among the insurgents, there cannot be the least doubt but that important political concessions, if not entire independence, might have been obtained by their arms. Nothing but the most wretched incompetency of generalship saved the exhausted and defeated troops of Col. Gore, during their helpless retreat to Sorel, through a country almost impassable, and intensely hostile. Col. Wetherall, in like manner, when retiring from St. Charles, had a leader of courage, decision, and influence headed the insurgents, might have been hemmed up in a district of enemies, his communications intercepted, and his whole division exposed to destruction. The individuals, however, who had the active guidance of the ill-starred populace really seem to have been altogether unequal to a crisis so important, and to have abandoned their compatriots, in the utmost exigency of their fate, to the inevitable destruction that awaited them, at the first sight of danger, and without fully testing the manifold resources of their cause. But true it is, that the men who are the best fitted to organize public opinion, and prepare nations for revolution, are often the least qualified for the sterner task of conducting them through the stormy trials of physical resistance to success. Had there been minds of capacity adequate to this occasion, the scabard, once thrown away, the warfare that ended so soon in overwhelming disaster, might have been easily prolonged by avoiding decisive battles, and harassing the soldiery, in a district where they had no friends, until the setting in of winter would almost have secured the possession of the country to its native inhabitants, and enabled their cause to derive the benefit of the immense accession of force, moral as well as physical, which an appearance of strength, and consistency of resistance, would have brought to the patriots. The people of England would never have suffered the continuance of the parricidal contest, and if they had, the people of America would have been restrained by no national considerations from rushing in thousands, as the event proved, at a moment's warning, to assist in the establishment of Canadian freedom. The events we are now to detail, following

immediately in the wake of the insurrection, and constituting a part of its history, will sufficiently prove this.

On the fifth of December, before the movements or intentions of Mackenzie and his party were made known, a very large and influential meeting of the citizens was held at Buffalo, the capital of the immense canal and lake trade of the State of New York, at which resolutions, warmly expressive of sympathy in the Canadian Revolution, were passed; and those great fundamental truths, which the success of the "American Experiment" have long made the practical law of political ethics, though still excluded from the colonial administration of Great Britain, were laid down in language of manly dignity and force, and a most exciting degree of interest in the fate of the Canadians, was developed to exist in the whole community. This feeling was greatly increased by the first news of Mackenzie's attempt on Toronto, which, it was represented, had been completely successful. Similar meetings were held at Ogdensburg, Oswego, and other places—pledging themselves to aid and assist the Canadians in every legal and constitutional manner; and committees were appointed to "receive subscriptions for purposes," in the words of the resolution, "not inconsistent with our situation as a government, or our duties as its citizens." The excitement, all along the frontier, daily increased as news arrived, and it is the highest possible praise to the character of the feeling, and the character of the people, that it was not regulated by the success or prospects of the cause it advocated, and was, in no respect, influenced or created by any fleeting popularity of great names or great actions, usually so apt to dazzle the multitude. On the contrary, when the power of the triumphant government had crushed all opposition, and the cause of the Patriots, as far as dependent on themselves, was hopelessly prostrated, this generous enthusiasm,—springing only from an earnest and innate love of freedom, among a people sensible from experience and principle of its value,—prompted the most active and vigorous assistance in their behalf, and induced exertions to assist them, as unani-

mous and sincere as they were disinterested. Thus it was, when reported success, fanned the Patriot banner, the good feeling was confined to favoring resolutions and addresses of encouragement only. But when revolution became *rebellion*, and patriotism, *treason*; when defeat had dishonored the cause, and the price of blood was on the outcast's head;—then sympathy became enthusiastic assistance, and was completely fanned into a flame when Mackenzie and the other refugees from Toronto, arrived in the American Territory. This gentleman, immediately after his defeat at Montgomery's tavern, made for the United States; and though Sir Francis Head offered a reward of one thousand pounds sterling for his apprehension,—with five hundred pounds for four of his associates, David Gibson, Samuel Lount, Jesse Lloyd, and Silas Fletcher,—he met with little difficulty in reaching the American frontier, and immediately found himself in a nation of friends. He reached Buffalo on the eleventh of December; and on the same evening an adjourned meeting of the "friends of Canada" was held at the theatre, which was much the largest assembly ever witnessed in the city. This meeting was again adjourned to the following evening, when it was addressed, among others, by Mackenzie and Dr. Sutherland, and a degree of enthusiasm was excited, which seemed to carry the whole city in its wake.

A corps of volunteers for the invasion of Canada was immediately resolved on, and the Eagle tavern was appointed the headquarters for recruiting and organizing an expedition. Contributions of arms, clothing, provisions, and munitions of war, were brought to this depot in immense quantities, and crowds of eager recruits hastened to enrol themselves under the new standard—a tri-colored flag, with two stars—which floated from the building. The Federal Government viewed these measures with alarm. Sincerely anxious to preserve its neutrality inviolate, it had issued the strictest orders to repress all such movements by every means at the command of the civil power; and the efforts of its officers were seconded by the city authorities of Buffalo with all their influence. But nothing could re-

press the spirit that prevailed. The arms and men were wanted to hunt "*red foxes*" in Canada; the money, to support the refugees. "*Deer hunts*," and "*Exploring Expeditions*" became suddenly the rage, and for the first time were found to require every warlike implement, from the cannon to the drum, to complete their equipment. Where an overwhelming majority of the community were enthusiastic accessories in these proceedings, it was in vain to think of enforcing laws of neutrality; and a corps consisting of more than three hundred men, fully armed and equipped, and bountifully supplied with every necessary, by their fellow-citizens, marched from the city the following morning, under the command of Mr. Rensselaer Van Rensselaer, of Albany, a gentleman deemed competent to the trust. Their first rendezvous was at the village of Black Rock, from which, on the sixteenth instant, Mr. Van Rensselaer marched the whole force to Tonawanda, and from thence took possession of Navy Island, near the Canada shore, which Mackenzie, with a few companions, had previously explored. Here they established the head-quarters of the Patriot Army, and began serious preparations for the invasion of Canada.

Navy Island, which was decided to belong to Canada by the Commissioners of the Treaty of Ghent, is situated a short distance from Grand Island, in the rapids of the river Niagara, just above the Falls, and is not more than half a mile distant from Chippewa point, on the Canada shore. It is about a mile and a half long, and a mile broad, and contains nearly four hundred acres. It is well wooded and sheltered. The dangerous strength of the current renders it almost inaccessible from the Canada shore, and a more advantageous point for a hostile demonstration against Canada could not have been possibly fixed upon.

The selection of this bold position by the invading force, produced a strong sensation both in Canada and the contiguous portions of the State of New York, and much heightened the feeling of enthusiasm prevalent for the patriotic cause. Every day brought large accessions to their numbers. Volunteers, supplies of clothing, and

provisions, in most beautiful profusion, from all points in the neighbourhood poured in upon them, and their armament soon amounted to six field pieces, and several hundred muskets, besides those in use by the men. These arms were principally obtained by forcible entry into the public arsenals, which had no adequate means of resisting the torrent of military ardor which seemed to sweep over the State. Van Rensselaer, with the title of General, was invested with the supreme command, and soon found himself at the head of near seven hundred men. Sutherland, and, it is said, Rolph, also, held subordinate commands; and Mackenzie was present as head of an imaginary provisional government, which was got up for the occasion. From this, a proclamation was issued, setting forth the objects of the invading army, and promising a bounty of three hundred acres of land to all volunteers whose personal aid should be rendered to the patriotic cause during the struggle. The Canadian Patriots were enjoined not to commit any depredations on the property of the royalists; and as a sarcasm probably on his own doings, a reward of five hundred pounds was offered for the apprehension of Sir Francis Head. This proclamation was signed "William Lyon Mackenzie, chairman pro tem. of the provisional government of Upper Canada"—who also issued various denominations of money in the form of Treasury notes, payable from the resources of the new government, whenever it should be established, which were readily taken in payment by all having any connection with the volunteers.

Demonstrations of hostility so alarming, after all internal danger within the province had ceased, naturally excited the indignation of the British authorities of Upper Canada. Col. McNabb, who had marched against Dr. Duncombe, into the London District, where this leader had a considerable force, but had met with no resistance, soon assembled a body of near two thousand men, with which, by the orders of the Governor, he marched to Chippewa, to have an eye to the movements in Navy Island. The respective forces remained opposite to each other without any occurrence of moment, until the twenty-

ninth of December. During this time, however, indications took place daily, tending to some serious event. Batteries were erected on the Canada shore, and large preparations were made for attacking the position of the Islanders, while a frequent interchange of ineffective cannonading between the parties, with minor occurrences incident to their position, contributed to give the aspect of affairs in this quarter a continued interest in the public mind, when an occurrence took place, that gave the whole matter, for a time, a very aggravated appearance, and, in the deep excitement which it produced, had well nigh compromised the national relations of the two countries.

On Friday, December twenty-ninth, a small steamboat called the *Caroline*, had sailed from Buffalo to Navy Island with passengers and various stores for the forces there, and continued throughout the day to ply as a ferry-boat between the Island and the shore, on the private account of the owner. In the evening this vessel was moored at Fort Schlosser, a landing place on the American shore. A small tavern, at this spot, the only accommodation it afforded, not being large enough to contain all the visitors whom circumstances had brought to the spot, a great number of strangers had availed themselves of the accommodations of the boat, and taken up their quarters in it for the night, when they were unexpectedly aroused by an outrage of an unparalleled description. Colonel McNabb, the Canadian commander, an unscrupulous creature of the government; and burning for an opportunity to display the obsequious readiness of his devotion to the cause of power, fancied he saw in the presence of this steamboat the occasion he wanted; and, undeterred by any considerations of national propriety or of consequences, arranged an expedition to cut the vessel from her moorings, and destroy her. One Drew, a retired officer in the British navy, was placed in command, and at ten o'clock at night, on the thirtieth of December, he put off with forty-five men in five boats, and coming unexpectedly alongside, he soon obtained admission—the boat, though crowded with men, being entirely unarmed—and with his crew commenced a furious and deadly attack

upon the inmates. As may be readily conceived, the latter were soon overpowered. Six of their number were killed; and several wounded, who, with the others were driven on the shore.

The vessel was then towed into the stream and set on fire. In a few minutes, the strong blaze which shot from the burning timbers, made the force on Navy Island, and the shore, aware of the deed; and exhibited to the crowds who rushed to the beach, a scene which had for them an awful interest, and strangely oppressed their minds with a feeling of sublimity, not less than unexampled terror. The thrilling cry ran around that there were living souls on board; and as the vessel, wrapt in vivid flame, which disclosed her doom as it shone brightly on the water, was hurrying down the resistless rapids to the tremendous Cataract of Niagara,—the everlasting thunder of which, more awfully distinct in the midnight stillness, horrified every mind with the presence of their inevitable fate,—numbers caught, in fancy, the wails of dying wretches hopelessly perishing by the double horrors of a fate which nothing could avert; and watched with agonized attention the flaming mass, till it was hurried over the falls to be crushed in everlasting darkness in the unfathomed tomb of waters below. Happily more accurate information afterwards disclosed the fact that no person was on board the boat when it was set on fire; but the whole circumstances lent a character of aggravation to the transaction that had a deeply exasperating effect on the public mind in every portion of the country.

The local authorities immediately organized a large force of the State militia, and marched them to the frontier; and on the second of January the Governor called the attention of the Legislature to the event in a special message, in which he stated that there were thirty-three persons in the boat who "were suddenly attacked at midnight, after they had retired to repose, and probably more than one-third of them wantonly massacred;" and that the twelve persons who were ascertained to be missing, were, "in all probability, either killed by the invaders or perished in the descent of the boat over the

cataract." The message further asserted that this "*outrage*" was not provoked by any act done, or duty neglected, by the government of this State or of the Union;" and while it left the charge of redressing the wrong, and sustaining the honor of the country to the General Government, it recommended the Legislature to make provision for a military force for the protection of the exposed citizens, and the maintenance of peace upon the frontier. The President of the United States followed up the matter with corresponding vigour. On the fifth of January the Secretary of War directed General Scott to repair to the frontier; and confided to him extensive discretionary powers for the preservation of peace. He also made a requisition on the Governors of New York and Vermont for a sufficient militia force to assist his operations; but gave him no instructions with regard to Navy Island, and similar Canadian expeditions, stating the fact that the Executive had no legal authority to restrain American citizens from making incursions into a neighbouring territory, even with hostile intent. He was wisely cautioned to employ a force from a distant section of the State, that it might not partake of the excitement prevalent in the vicinity of these transactions; and the President's confident hope was expressed that the General would be able to maintain the peace of the frontier without employing his military force. To allay still farther the dangerous excitement, which infected the whole frontier, and bid fair to embroil both countries in a mutual war, the President issued his proclamation, warning these individuals of the unlawfulness of their conduct, and accompanying an earnest exhortation for them to disperse, with the solemn assurance that they would not only be punished with the utmost severity of existing law, but that they should receive no countenance or aid from their own Government should their conduct place them in the power of the neighbouring and friendly nation against which their aggressions were directed.—To these salutary measures the country was, in all probability, indebted for the continuance of peace.

On the same day that General Scott re-

ceived his commission, the Secretary of State called the attention of the British Minister, resident at Washington, to this "extraordinary outrage;" spoke of the loss of life occasioned by it as "the assassination of citizens of the United States on the soil of New York," which he did not doubt the disposition of the Canadian authorities to punish; and stated that it would necessarily form the subject of a demand for redress upon Her Majesty's government. On the eighth the President transmitted a message to both Houses of Congress, in which he brought the matter before them, together with the steps he had taken in relation to it. In this message Mr. Van Buren designated the affair "as an outrage of a most aggravated character," "accompanied by a hostile, though temporary, invasion of our territory producing the strongest feelings of resentment on the part of our citizens in the neighbourhood, and on the whole border line;" and concluded by asking for "such appropriations as the circumstances in which our country is thus unexpectedly placed require." These messages gave rise in Congress to spirited debates, in the course of which, though the excitement prevalent out of doors strongly tinted the language of several members, a general disposition was evident to sustain the President in his necessary efforts to preserve the frontier peace. An act was speedily passed authorizing the seizure of any vessel or vehicle evidently destined for hostile operations against a neighboring nation, and also of any military armament prepared within the territory of the Union for like purpose. Foreigners taking refuge in the United States were also to be disarmed, so long as he deemed it necessary. This act soon produced the most salutary effects. Although Sir Francis Head by sanctioning the destruction of the Caroline, and officially thanking its perpetrators for their gallantry in effecting it, as well as by the supercilious and derogatory tone in which he spoke of the conduct of the United States in reference to these disturbances, contributed to keep alive a feeling of resentment towards the British authorities, yet it soon became evident that the public opinion of the Union was

assuming a more healthy tone, and setting strongly against any infraction of the neutral and peaceable relations existing with Great Britain. The presence of General Scott, and Governor Marcy, with a considerable force in the disturbed district, and the efficient measures which the General adopted in discharge of his functions, contributed to this, and tended greatly to allay the morbid feeling of excitement which constituted the main support of the Navy Island project; and convinced the leaders of the expedition that they must be solely dependent on themselves in their operations against Canada.—Meanwhile the British force was strongly increased on the opposite shore by part of the 21st regular regiment from Montreal, and such a powerful force of artillery, as left the Patriots, though their numbers had swelled to above fifteen hundred men, not the slightest chance of success in a regular engagement, could they have effected a landing.

On the thirteenth of January, the British opened a heavy cannonade with shot and shells upon the Island, which continued for four hours, and was answered with equal spirit by the patriots, without producing any considerable effect on either side. Armed vessels were next brought into the river; and General Scott was given to understand that the British were resolved on the destruction of the Navy Islanders, *in transitu*, should they attempt to land on the Canadian shore.

Every thing thus tending to show the hopelessness of their present attempt, the patriots broke up their camp, and left the Island, on Sunday, the 14th of January, when it was immediately after taken possession of by the British, whose red-cross flag, securely flying from it, on the following day announced to all that its soil was again in possession of its rightful owners. Mr. Mackenzie had been previously, and General Van Rensselaer was soon afterwards, arrested by United States officers; and were bound over for trial at the ensuing District Court for organizing a hostile expedition within the territory of the United States against a friendly nation. That the popular irritation, occasioned by the destruction of the Caroline, nevertheless continued unaffected by

the prospects of the patriots, may be sufficiently judged from the fact that the grand jury of Niagara county, in the State of New York, indicted McNabb, Drew, and every other person who was ascertained to have been instrumental to that act, for wilful murder.

On their dispersion, some of the patriots returned to their homes, but the most considerable portion proceeded up Lake Erie to Detroit, for the purpose of joining a large body of their associates, who were assembled under Gen. Sutherland at Gibraltar, an American island, at the mouth of the Detroit river, opposite Malden, Upper Canada, with the avowed intent of invading the province at a point where, from the absence of any considerable force, the attempt was likely to be more feasible.

This additional army—which, from the manner in which it acquired strength and supplies of all kinds, showed that the population on the extreme northern frontier of the Union were as strongly in favor of the patriotic cause as their brethren, at any other point—for a considerable time kept up a high degree of alarm and excitement on the opposite sections of the Canadian territory. It was above five hundred strong, and was accompanied by General Theller, a naturalized American—originally from Ireland, but long resident in Toronto, where the generosity with which he dispensed considerable wealth made him exceedingly popular—Colonels McKinney, Dodge, and other influential persons, both Canadian and American. It was greatly assisted in its organization by the citizens of Detroit and the neighbourhood, who swelled the military chest of the adventurers with the proceeds of a benefit at the theatre; and presented them so liberally with private contributions, that Sutherland was enabled to purchase a schooner named the *Ann*, which was armed and loaded with arms, provisions, and stores of all kinds, to further their intended operations. This vessel, which constituted a sort of floating arsenal, they were enabled, by the favor of the inhabitants, to get off from Detroit in defiance of the attempt of the State and National authorities to stop her; and having mustered a number of boats and a small sloop,

as a tender, the whole body rendezvoused at Sugar Island, belonging to Michigan, in the river Detroit. From this, on the ninth of January, Sutherland took possession of *Bois Blanc* or White Wood Island, belonging to the British, driving before him, without loss, a force of about three hundred, consisting of militia, negroes, and Indians, who were in garrison for its protection.

The schooner under the command of Gen. Theller was then sent to cruise before Malden, with a view of intercepting a vessel which the inhabitants were preparing for their defence; but a strong gale blowing in shore, she grounded, in the night, off Elliot's point, and was attacked by a body of the local militia and negroes, to whom, notwithstanding a spirited resistance, she was soon obliged to surrender; their friends on the Island who witnessed the whole, it being clear moonlight, were unable, from the strength of the gale, to render any assistance. In this action the patriots had several killed, and the whole crew, twenty in number, including Theller, Col. Dodge, Capt. Davis, and Col. Brophy, the most efficient men in the expedition, were made prisoners, and sent forward to London gaol, to answer the charge of high treason. This schooner was a valuable prize for the captors, containing three cannon—one nine, and two six pounders—three hundred and sixty stand of small arms with bayonets and accoutrements complete, a large quantity of ammunition, and six hundred and thirty dollars in specie, besides clothing and other materials. Its loss, moreover, proved a fatal one to the expedition. The Legislature of Michigan becoming aroused to the dangerous character of these proceedings, with reference to the national peace, now interfered to prevent their continuance, and Governor Mason took resolute measures to break up the force. Two thousand men were granted by the Legislature to assist him in protecting the frontier; and the Governor having, on the twelfth of January, accompanied by a civil force, personally visited their camp, and deprived them of all their arms, the main body after lingering about for a few days longer, finally dispersed.

The fever of the public mind was not

however yet spent; and the friends of Canadian independence were resolved not to let the winter pass without making the utmost use of the strong feeling in their favor along the frontier. Four expeditions seem to have been undertaken which were to enter Canada at different points all along the line. One was to move from Detroit, one from Sandusky, in Ohio, a third from Watertown, in New York, and the fourth from Vermont, under Drs. Nelson and Côté. In pursuance of this arrangement General Van Rensselaer, and McLeod, the adjutant of the Navy Island army—a Canadian, and a retired British officer—with straggling parties of their followers, made their way, in the beginning of February, to Michigan, and commenced preparations for an extended movement to Canada on the twenty-second of February.

The vigilance and activity of General Scott, and of General Brady, who commanded at Michigan, with some repulses they met from the British, frustrated the object of the two first of these agitating disturbances. The *Fulton*, a powerful steamer, was taken into the service of the United States, and with a strong detachment of regular troops on board, under the command of Col. Worth, was ordered to cruise along the American coast of Lake Erie with a view to prevent any fresh assemblages of armed bodies from proceeding to Canada. On the 22d of January this detachment landed at Dunkirk, and broke up and dispersed a body of near three hundred of the patriots, recently from Navy Island, who were waiting, in pursuance of the general plan for a steam packet to carry them to Sutherland's head-quarters. The Colonel, notwithstanding the rage and imprecations of the men, took all their arms into custody, and thus effectually deprived them of power for harm. Col. Worth, after this, remained in station at Detroit, where his presence contributed to destroy the hopes of many who thought the Federal Government would not have actively interfered to prevent these operations.

General Brady, having received notice of these extensive designs, made a requisition on Governor Mason for four hundred men to prevent them within his district. It

is a forcible illustration of the depth and extent of the feeling existing among the whole frontier population in favor of the patriots, that the greater portion of the arms destined for these troops found their way—even before they were unpacked—to the invading army; and General Brady was so apprehensive that his men would take a like direction, that he immediately disbanded them. A small body of regulars soon afterwards arrived to his assistance, on which better dependence could be placed.

The restless energy and enthusiasm, however, which prompted these various movements, and which, properly directed, might have produced the most striking results, seems to have expended itself in a series of desultory and ineffective attempts, which served no purpose but to provoke and exasperate the British authorities, and to disgust the real friends of the patriotic cause, on both sides of the line.

A considerable number of men who were assembled as the nucleus of one of these expeditions on Fighting Island, in the Detroit river, were driven from their camp by the British, on the twenty-fifth of February. Not deeming the ice practicable, this force bore, with great composure, a steady fire of artillery, which was opened upon them, until they saw the whole body of the British, consisting of nearly six hundred regulars and militia, under Major Townshend of the 24th regiment, crossed from the mainland upon the ice in single files, to attack them, when they broke up in great confusion, deserting one piece of artillery which they possessed, and most of them leaving their arms and provisions behind.

The United States troops, under Col. Worth, dispersed another of these irregular bands, by marching upon a large body of them, well-armed, who had rendezvoused at Comstock's tavern, on the lake shore, eight miles from Detroit. About one hundred and fifty of these actually attempted to cross the lake on the ice into Canada, before Col. Worth came up,—but the intensity of the cold compelled them to retrace their steps, having spent the night on the ice, where every one had well nigh perished. They dispersed on reaching land, and all their arms were re-

covered. A very powerful demonstration upon Kingston, Upper Canada, from Watertown, in Jefferson county, New York, proved a similar abortion. By messengers sent to all parts of the country, near fifteen hundred men were assembled at French creek, a stream which falls into the St. Lawrence, some distance below Kingston, and took a position favorable for passing into Canada. The militia and loyalists of the province were, however, thoroughly aroused, and prepared for them, which, with some difference that arose between the leaders, Mr. Mackenzie and Gen. Van Rensselaer, so damped the courage of the invaders, that very few could be induced to persevere; and the enterprise was, in consequence, abandoned, the people returning to their homes. The arsenal at Watertown had been plundered to arm this corps; and, on the twenty-fourth, the arsenal at Batavia was also opened, and above one hundred muskets, besides other arms, and one thousand pounds of powder taken out. On the twenty-fifth the arsenal at Elizabethtown, in Essex county, was served in the same manner, and above one thousand muskets abstracted; in consequence of which, Governor Marcy offered rewards varying from five hundred to two hundred and fifty dollars for the detection of any one concerned in these lawless outrages. The greatest part of this property was, however, afterwards recovered.

A force of about six hundred, organized under the command of Doctors R. Nelson and Côté, at Alburg, Vermont, in concert with these defeated movements, met with a like result. On the last day of February they crossed the lines at Caldwell's Manor, and issued a Declaration of Independence, and a proclamation to the Canadians, signed by "Robert Nelson, President;" but becoming convinced, from information, that a much stronger regular force was advancing against them, they recrossed the line into the United States on the following morning, and surrendered the army to General Wool, who took both the leaders into custody.

The latest in point of date of all these headless and aimless expeditions which, originating at the extreme Northwestern frontier, for so long a time distracted the

peace of the country, did not terminate without producing results of bloodshed. A strong body of men, collected from the original rendezvous at Sandusky Bay, in Ohio, and swelled by numbers from bands previously dispersed, had taken possession of Pele Island, which is situated in Lake Erie, about twenty miles from the Canadian shore. This last refuge of the patriots is a place of considerable magnitude, being nearly nine miles long and seven broad, and from its position, about forty miles from Amherstburg, and twenty from the shore of Canada, the patriot leaders thought they could maintain themselves in unmolested security, until they could concentrate all their scattered bands upon it, preparatory to a combined movement upon Canada. The British regulars were now, however, on duty on the opposite shore, and their commander was not at all disposed to let such a plan mature in the quietness they expected. Col. Maitland, of the 22d regiment, who was in command, was no sooner apprized of their presence than he moved with his whole force, consisting of two guns, five companies of regulars, and about two hundred militia and Indians, of which forty were cavalry, about eighteen miles along the coast to a point where the ice was practicable, and at two o'clock in the morning of the third of March set off for the Island. This dreary night-march was safely accomplished, and the troops landed, at day break. On the third, Capt. Brown, with two companies of the 32d, and the volunteer cavalry, was sent round to the south end of the Island, and Col. Maitland, with the guns and the remainder of the force, landing at the northern extremity, drove the patriots before him, till they encountered Capt. Brown's detachment when a smart action took place, the firing being kept up on both sides with much spirit until the Patriots, from the want of artillery were compelled to retire to the woods. Here the whole number, finding themselves about to be completely surrounded, got into sleighs which they had ready, and escaping at an unprotected point, safely reached the American shore, leaving their commander, Col. Bradley, and a part of their number behind them wounded. Major Howdley,

Captains, Van Rensselaer and McKeon, with a few privates, were killed; and the British regulars sustained the severe loss of thirty men in killed and wounded.

We have described those confused, and unwarrantable operations, because they were inseparably connected with the subject, and possess an important interest, in developing, both to England, Canada, and the United States, the one irrefragable fact, that the PEOPLE in these contiguous regions cannot be separated in their feelings and interests; and that, however Britain may legislate, the hardy, simple, republican, people of the Union, hold, at all times, the balance of power between her and her province in their hands, and that it rests, at any moment, with the Canadians themselves, to maintain the equipoise with European interests and European rulers,—the cumbrous inutility of an irresponsible monarchy and its ten thousand alien bayonets,—or to make the scale preponderate, in a moment, with the priceless benefits of popular liberty, self-government, and national independence, cheaply and lastingly secured. This is but anticipating the language of history, and is a question on which governments and their interests can have little bearing.

We can barely mention the consequences of this hapless popular outbreak in the Canadas. When the news reached England, it filled the Whig Ministry with despair, and the Tories with equal exultation. The latter saw in it only the bitter fruits of the few concessions which the growing murmurs and strength of the people had, within the last few years, wrung from the niggard hand of power,—and the extremes of political science met when they united with the friends of Canada in saying that *misgovernment* was the cause. The Ministry were now resolved to retrieve their fault, and met the crisis by erring on the other side. An overwhelming force was directed to move upon Canada. In full Parliament, the provincial constitution—the reluctant boon of former fears—was suspended, and a bill was introduced creating a new officer, in-

vesting him with dictatorial power, to remedy every evil. A hint from Sir Robert Peel sufficed to banish from this act the only clause which recognized such a troublesome thing as “the people,” and an unmingled despotism with ten thousand soldiers to sustain it, was the sovereign remedy of an English Whig Ministry for all the calamities of the crisis. Such a measure did not pass through an English Parliament, however, without awakening from their slumber some of those awful truths which once, in the same cause, kindled the echoes of that glorious hall of legislation in the immortal eloquence of a Chatham and a Burke. There was found a voice of manhood in that hall to tell the people of England, that “success was more a matter of regret than gratulation, when a free nation was found tyrannizing over a people equally free, and combatting in behalf of their own rights;” and to pray in the face of the Commons of England that “curses might be heaped on the heads of a Ministry who could spend the national resources in defence of principles so disgraceful to a free country.”*

Our narrative here reaches its close, for the present. The continuation of the history, in its sequel, both as to the subsequent dealings of the English authorities with the host of prisoners left on their hands, and as to the measures to be adopted for the future tranquillity of the colonies, must be reserved till time shall have sufficiently developed the course that events are to take. Of the actors in these troubled and wretched scenes, Lord Gosford resigned in the month of February, while the events above related were yet in progress. He was temporarily replaced by Sir John Colborne, his second in authority in the Province, who was installed with illuminations in Montreal, in grateful remembrance of his own at St. Eustache. Sir Francis Head’s resignation was also rendered necessary by an irreconcilable disagreement between himself and the Ministry at home, chiefly in relation to some important civil appoint-

* Sir William Molesworth, in debate on the Canada Bill, December 23, 1837. Mr. Leader and Mr. Hume distinguished themselves by their efforts in behalf of the Canadians, on the same occasion. Mr. O’Connell was absent from London at the time, or we cannot suppose that his voice would have been silent in the same cause.

ments—a disagreement antecedent, in its origin, to the events of the insurrection. He did not omit the occasion afforded by his last public act, in his farewell to the House of Assembly (on the 6th March.) to discharge a Parthian arrow at the republican institutions of this country, to the contagious and sympathetic spirit of which was chiefly to be attributed the recent effervescence of a people held down by military force in the unnatural relation of colonial subjection to a distant mother country.

His successor reached Toronto about the first of April, Col. Sir George Arthur, a stern, uncompromising soldier, whom an apprenticeship in the military government of a colony of convicts in New South Wales might doubtless be presumed to have peculiarly fitted for this position. The immediate authors of the "gallant enterprise," of the burning of the Caroline, McNabb and Drew, in addition to thanks and honors from the Provincial House of Assembly, were also rewarded by the Government at home, the former by the honor of knighthood, and the latter by professional promotion. It is to be presumed that this act—in any other aspect so wantonly insulting to the Government of the United States—was performed in the first excitement of the receipt of a partial statement of the affair, and before the strong complaint and demand for redress, on the part of the latter, had reached the English Ministry. The new Viceroy of the Canadas, Lord Durham, has arrived, at the date of the closing of the present article, upon the coast, surrounded with all the pomp of wealth, rank, and military display, and all the power of an authority little short of dictatorial. What is to be the end of all no man yet can know.

The cause of the Patriots in Canada now lies prostrate. It is easy, therefore, to swell the cry of condemnation, which it seems the fate of failure always to deserve. But let not, at least, democratic history be false to itself, by refusing to record its sympathy—not less strong in defeat than it would have been in victory—in behalf of a cause which cannot be otherwise than sacred in the eyes of every sincere American friend of popular free-

dom, though it has been precipitated to its present ruin, equally by the fierce haste of its eager and exulting enemies, and by the lamentable incompetency of its own leaders. Never has that favorite policy of despotism been more completely successful, of fomenting and irritating immature discontent into overt rebellion, that it may be crushed at once, in its unorganized weakness, by the armed heel of military preparation. The world will never forget the revolting application of the same policy to Ireland, at the memory of which it still shudders. The present case, with all the horrors of a St. Charles or a St. Eustache, from obvious necessary differences of time and circumstance, falls so immeasurably short of the former defeated rebellion, that, in the difference of degree, the similarity of kind is not at first sight manifest. But to the reader who will fairly consider the almost rabid fury of a portion of the Tory press in Canada; the malignant spirit towards the liberal reform party, which they breathe, in that faction which, from the outset, took into its hands the crushing of the insurrection, which they precipitated if they did not provoke; the reasonableness of the reform for which Papineau and his friends had been so long contending, viz. *an Elective Council*; the absence of all plan or preparation on the part of the Patriots, when they were forced into a desultory and scarcely armed rising by outrages on their persons and property, and by the attempted seizure of all their leading men; Papineau's plan of peaceful agitation and non-consumption, referred to in his letter *addressed* among Dr. Wolfred Nelson's papers,—to the reader who will fairly consider these, and the other evidences contained in the above narrative, we think that it will be apparent that this fearful guilt of unprepared rebellion, with all the blood and misery in its train, ought, in justice, to rest, rather on the heads of those who are now triumphant in victory, than upon those who are crushed in defeat,—upon those who have to inflict, rather than upon those who have to suffer, the penalty which the conquered—by the law of *re victis*!—must always pay for the crimes and errors of both.





